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THE

NEW VIRGINIANS

"Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,
And merrily hent the stile-a:
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a."

—*A Winter's Tale*, Act iv. sc. 2.

THE NEW VIRGINIANS

BY THE AUTHOR OF

'JUNIA,' 'ESTELLE RUSSELL,' 'THE PRIVATE LIFE OF GALILEO,' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
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TO

HER FRIEND

MRS NEWTON CROSLAND

TO WHOM MOST OF THE FOLLOWING LETTERS WERE

ADDRESSED, THIS COLLECTION OF THEM

IS CORDIALLY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LETTER I.

PAGE

The wharf at Norfolk—Negro costumes—Strawberries—Norfolk town—Norfolk—Recollections of the war—The Dismal Swamp—What constitutes a city?—Cooks' husbands—Female ghastliness—The family hotel—A sliding-scale of manners—How the Queen breakfasts—American ideas of the Queen—Departure from the family hotel—What a climate!—Having the "chills"—Thunderstorms—A point of family feeling—View in front—Plague of servants—The negro way of milking—Milking and marriage—Farm fine-ladyism, . . . 1

LETTER II.

Among thieves—Country herbs—A.'s housekeeper—Negro servants—Jenny's husband—Bread-making—Difficulties of bread-making—Virginian pigs—The crop—Bottom facts about the land—Worn-out land—Virginian agriculture—"Edened"—Ruined vegetables—Careless tradesmen—What befell the garden-plot—Lunar influences, . 50

LETTER III.

Snakes—Vermin—Foxes—Bedroom troubles—Stinging insects—Wasps and mud-daubers—Spiders—The cow-bug—Birds—Humming-birds—Locusts, ... 86

LETTER IV.

Virginian hospitality—House-building—American houses —American restlessness—Climbers—The ice-house—The cook-house—Want of privacy—Unseasonable condolence—Gardening disappointments—Uncle Pomp—Uncle Pomp a defaulter—Winter dresses—Cold in Virginia—A horse epidemic—Shopping—A cold journey —Home—The Virginian winter—The washerwoman strikes—Break-up of the ice, ... 113

LETTER V.

Arboriculture—Female slavery—Western experiences — Western settlers—The prose and poetry of drudgery—The thrashing-dinner—Difficulties about provisions—Milking—Churning—Gentility on dairy-work—Home-made implements—Across country—Going to church—"Shiloh"—The sermon—The candidates—Baptism by effusion—Revivalistic manifestations, . . . 165

LETTER VI.

A ruined homestead—An afternoon call—Calls—Clerical tyranny — "Doing as the Romans do" — Legree—"Mighty discomposing" discourse — "'Ole Mis's' doings"—"Ole Mis'"—Aunt Delphy—The boy Dan—Catechising—A negro statesman on the dog-tax—Civil rights—Negro hymns—Negro religion, . . . 208

LETTER VII.

Virginian blue blood—F. F. V.'s—English descendants—The Sunday question—American exaggeration—Moses B. Momin—Looking out for a piano—Another Earl of Mar!—Choosing a piano—A member of our church—Bringing home the piano—Night on the river-boat—Winter, ... 247

THE NEW VIRGINIANS.

LETTER I.

It was on a blazing hot day in the beginning of June 187— that we landed at Norfolk in Virginia. The arrival of the steamer appeared to be a great event. The wharf and road leading (presumably) to the station were crowded with carts which seemed ready to drop to pieces, driven helter-skelter by ragged negroes in full enjoyment of the confusion they created. As long as they carried the merchandise and passengers' luggage somewhere, it seemed not to matter where. In this way we missed two trunks, and did not recover them for weeks, the trunks, notwithstanding labels, having been put

into a baggage-car for Memphis in Tennessee. Other passengers were still more unfortunate.

As I stood on the wharf, watching over a pile of boxes, while E. had gone on board again, hoping to discover his precious chest of English tea, a grey-haired individual detached himself from a group, walked up to me, and with a polite bow, presented me with a sprig of calycanthus. I learnt afterwards that he was a prominent citizen. I believe all the prominent citizens go down to the wharf to look at the steamers unloading. I do not know what they do on the days when there are no steamers. Did you ever see the calycanthus? In Mrs Loudon's gardening book it is described as a deciduous shrub, a native of North America. In a garden at Norfolk I saw it as a tree: it has a maroon-coloured flower, somewhat resembling an aster in general outline, and having the most delicious odour imaginable,—a combination of clove, melon, and tuberose. This little whiff of "Araby the blest" coming suddenly to me on that dirty wharf, where I was standing under such sunshine as I had not felt for years—tired, thirsty, bewildered

with the noise and confusion—was more grateful than I can put into words, and made me instantly incline towards Virginia and her people. It was so nicely done, this little mute welcome to Virginia! No Frenchman could have done it better—nay, perhaps a Frenchman might not have done it so well, because, very likely, there would have been some intrusion of his own personality in it; whereas in this case there was absolutely none. As to Virginia and the Virginians, my mind had till then been absolutely a *tabula rasa;* no first impression could have been happier. As to those other Virginians, the "poor, dear, black slaves," my mind was not a *tabula rasa* at all. How could it be so, after the showers of tears I had shed over the sorrows of 'Uncle Tom'? "Oh," I thought, "if we should be so lucky as to come across an Uncle Tom, how kind we will be to him!"

Keeping my eyes open, I observe, first, that the blacks are rarely as black as they are painted. How shall I describe the prevailing complexion? It is that of people who, having been much burnt by the sun, have diligently rubbed them-

selves with soot, or with some pigment which shows the grain of the skin through it. I notice that they are, as a rule, bandy-legged, and that they walk like parrots, toes turned in. I notice, further, that the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet and their heels are not black at all, but of a dirty colour, somewhat resembling that of a London brick. Their feet are flat and enormously large, with spreading toes. Their hands are, as a rule, well shaped, and inclined to be small rather than large. They are constantly grinning, and constantly rolling their eyes in a way that makes my blood curdle. Their skin shines as if polished; and they take things easily, as if life were a perpetual holiday. I do not think I saw then, or for a long time afterwards, a negro that looked starved, or wretched, or anything but jolly and ragged. As to raggedness, though, I must except Sundays: on Sundays rags are the exception, instead of the rule. It is quite a delightful and refreshing spectacle to see a negro on his way to church, or "steppin' aroun'" visiting, in a shiny tall hat (they much affect the "chimney-pot" since

the emancipation), a wonderfully bright tie, and a fine expanse of starched shirt-front. The intense self-satisfaction displayed in his features; the fine flourish with which his hat comes off to a "cullud lady;" the bowing, the polite inquiries after the lady's health—"Hope I see you well, ma'am?" "Quite well, sah. Is you all well *at* home, sah?" "I thank you, ma'am; we's tolluble, ma'am—jes' tolluble,"—and so on. All this must provoke a smile, even in the most saturnine. Once I saw a negro—a very black one too—with white gloves on; he must have been going to a wedding, or else to a funeral. The Norfolk negro women wear the most hideous sun-bonnets I ever saw. They are not so ragged on week-days as the men. The young ones stick chignons, covered with invisible nets, on the back of their heads. The effect is comical. The commoner sort are much addicted to bright scarlets, yellows, and greens; but the cultivated lady-blacks eschew all violent colours, and affect half-tints, drabs, and Quaker greys. I saw two such women, the material and fit of whose dress were precisely like those of one I had brought from

England. Their skins were blacker than usual; and the effect of shiny black on dead dove colour was bad. Scarlet-and-green would have suited them far better. Nearly all negro women have fine statuesque forms, and a splendid carriage. White women may envy,—they need not hope to copy them, unless, indeed, they use their method from the beginning. It is a very simple one: they go barefoot in summer, never wear stays, and carry everything on their heads.

We had hoped to arrive in Virginia in time for the strawberry season; but we were almost too late. There was a negro on the wharf with a wooden bucketful of them,—wood strawberries they looked like; but they were all gone before we had a chance of getting any. At supper at the hotel there was a smallish dish for each table,—wood strawberries again. A Northerner told me that the American wild strawberries far surpassed in flavour any English garden strawberry yet "invented." I said I was glad to hear it. I was not so insular as to suppose that because I was an Englishwoman, therefore of necessity English strawberries must beat the straw-

berries of all the world in point of flavour. Somehow, the Virginian strawberries do not do what was promised in their behalf. It may be sheer perversity on my part,—or is it perversity on the part of the strawberries? but I own to unworthy hankerings after the Devonshire strawberry, the Cornish strawberry,—for the matter of that, the Belgian strawberry, the *Triomphe de Gand.* We do have strawberry feasts *now*, it is true—after a long fast—from the descendants of strawberry plants from a garden in Cornwall, sent to us in a letter by a dear English friend. We do everything we can for them, and they are satisfactory as to size. But the fact is, the strawberry wants gentle heat and gentle rain to bring it to perfection; and here summer comes with a burst, and the rain generally pours in bucketfuls. As for the wild strawberries, they make good preserve, and they can be eaten smothered in cream and sugar, in default of garden fruit, if the negroes are not too lazy to pick them for you. They are better than nothing, and that is all that can be said for them.

We took a walk round Norfolk, and found it a very dead-alive, tumble-down, unfinished sort of place. Only the ugliest, coarsest kind of wares were displayed in the shop-windows. The white people were mostly dressed in cotton print. I do not remember seeing one silk dress ; hardly a muslin. Here and there was a brick house,—I saw two which looked rather old,—but most were of wood, painted or unpainted. The windows are high and narrow—much like those one sees in Southern France. They have paper blinds, green or blue, or with a bright pattern, which give the façades the look of side scenes,—I don't know why, except that the paper and the coarse pigment heighten the general air of ricketiness and unsubstantiality. The hotel front was magnificently done up to resemble heavy granite. On going out on the balcony I found it was all painted wood, pilasters and mouldings all warping and splitting. Yet the loftiness of the ceilings, and the plan of it altogether, showed it to be comparatively a new house. The town is built on the northern bank of the Elizabeth River. It lies

low, yet is without the excess of evil odours one would naturally expect in such a situation. The natives hold it up as a pattern of salubrity, and tell you that, in 1844, there were only 209 deaths in a population of 11,000, about half of which were blacks. As since the emancipation the blacks have crowded together at their own sweet wills,—as they have even less idea of hygiene than our own lower classes, and consider money spent on doctors as sinfully wasted, —it is probable that the death-rate is now somewhat higher. We were told that we had missed seeing the west end, and that, had we seen it, we should have had quite a different idea of Norfolk. But it appears to me, that to gauge the prosperity of a place it is better to see the business part. We saw a few streets of insignificant shops; a garden or two within walls, tangled and overgrown; plenty of grinning negroes; a few pale-faced, white-lipped women; a few buggies, very like the tin toys which delight children; a desolate wharf when the steamer was gone; empty building-lots in the heart of the town, repositories for all ima-

ginable refuse; sorry gaps in the lines of houses, queer tumble-down wooden shanties; one or two white men who seemed half dead with ague; a big pool of stagnant water at the back of the hotel; mud-banks; a low coast as far as the eye could reach. That was Norfolk. I felt sorry for the place.

It is an old place—for Virginia. When it was established as a town, in 1705, there was already a considerable settlement. George II. made it a borough by royal charter in 1736. After that it had its mayor, and its corporation, and its silver mace, and became very proud and very loyal. When the news of the battle of Culloden reached Virginia, three months after it took place, there were great rejoicings at Norfolk. A procession was organised, which went on horseback through the principal streets. There was a band, consisting of three drummers, three violins, and a piper. After these came six men carrying long white rods, wearing paper badges with appropriate mottoes, such as—"Liberty," "Property," "No Pretender," "No Wooden Shoes." Then came a man dressed like

a nurse, who carried a warming-pan with a child in it peeping out. Then came the effigy of the Pretender in Highland costume, seated in an arm-chair, and guarded by six men with drawn cutlasses. Last of all came the whole population of Norfolk and the neighbourhood. A gibbet was erected where three streets met, the effigy was strung up, and then burnt; while royal salutes were fired from every vessel in the harbour. The gentlemen assembled in the Court-house and drank loyal healths; and liquor in "great plenty" was provided for the populace. In the evening there was a general illumination and a ball, and plenty of "innocent mirth and unaffected joy."

Norfolk continued loyal up to 1775, when party-spirit began to divide the inhabitants. There were the loyalists and the patriots—*i.e.*, those who wished to secede from the mother country; and the two parties often came to blows. At one time the loyalists were obliged to take refuge on board some of the king's ships. After various useless parleyings with the patriots, Lord Dunmore bombarded the

rebellious town, and burnt it on New-Year's Day, 1776. That was pretty hard on the poor loyalists.

In American presentations of the War of Independence, there is one very prominent feature—namely, the excessive poltroonery of the British. If American accounts be accurate, the British Government must have carefully selected for service all who were likely to show the white feather, from the governor downwards. I do not remember to have noticed this in English histories of that period.

Norfolk took no part in the late war between North and South. Hampton Roads, close by, was burnt; but Norfolk, dominated by the United States navy, was forced to make a virtue of necessity, and surrendered quite at the beginning of the war. Many families had relatives in the navy, and these, though Virginians to the backbone, joined the Federal side. In the case of military men, as far as I could learn, the feeling for the State overcame the feeling for the Union. Even those who were Abolitionists—and the number of these is greater than

I had any idea of—joined the Southern cause rather than fight against the South. There was division in families, of course, as a consequence of such a state of things; but far less bitterness than one would have expected. One lady, from whom I obtained some information as to the social aspects of the secession, said, speaking of a brother-in-law, who was a captain in the U.S. navy at the time: "He was a very conscientious man. He had grown up, as it were, under the Union flag, and he felt he must stay under that flag. We respected him for doing what he felt to be his duty, but of course it was very painful to us. Here were we, with a large family of brothers, half joining the North, and the other half going with the South: each following the dictates of duty, as far as he could see. We were not by any means exceptions. And his wife, a Northern woman, went north when the war broke out. He was not in active employment at the time, and he felt he could not stay in Norfolk. We went to our own plantation in Botetourt. They were in a dreadful state of anxiety about us towards the

last. They thought we were starving, and they came down to look after us as soon as they heard of the surrender. We were not *quite* starving; but it was very near it, after Crooke's men had passed our way. Many of my friends had not a single article of food of any kind left the day these Yankees departed. And the destruction!" Here the poor lady's eyes filled, and I felt myself a wretch for asking questions, and begged her pardon for having made her think of that unhappy time.

I did not know—till we were in it—that the railway from Norfolk to Lynchburg passed through the Dismal Swamp. We rolled out of the miserable shanty they call the depot—pronounced *dee-po*—passed fields where miserable cows were grazing on dried-up tussocky grass. Then trees became more frequent, and clumps of tall waving reeds, and at length we seemed to be entering an enchanted forest. Never till now had I seen such visions of loveliness in the shape of trees; such wonderful diversity of outline, of leaf, of tint! White pines, cedars, junipers, all of noble size, were growing in pools

of stagnant water. There were water-lilies and strange aquatic plants, and banks and hillocks of the blackest, richest mould, and long stretches of scarlet trumpet-flower, growing as irrepressibly as the bramble does at home. Now and then we came to a clearing where a tiny wooden house, unpainted, stood well up from the ground on posts, with its tiny yard and its peach orchard. Dismal seemed a sad misnomer for such a lovely spot. Dismal it is, nevertheless, for the white man, who (they say) risks his life if he stays one night here. The conductors of trains arriving at Norfolk in the evening take care to keep the windows of the cars shut, to keep out the deadly malaria.

E. bought a Norfolk paper to while away the time, and had the glory of seeing his name among the distinguished arrivals. M. and I were lumped together as "wife and child." E. said we might settle it between us which was which; but we have not quite settled it yet.

The train stopped for dinner at a station called Burksville. It was just a wooden shanty or two in the midst of a clearing. I saw no

houses, or signs of any. The dinner was laid out on little tables in a shanty raised high from the ground. The food in itself was not so bad, but the way in which it was served took away our appetites. There was not a table-cloth to be seen, the knives and forks were stained, and all the surroundings were of the coarsest, meanest description. The temperature during the day must have been about 80°, and M. and I had suffered intensely from thirst. We had not thought of buying a travelling glass the evening before, and we could not make up our minds to drink from the one glass used by all the people in the car. Americans vaunt the advantages of their car system over our compartment system. If there happens to be a lunatic on board, I would rather be in an American car; else, I prefer the English compartment. In a long journey, to see a constantly shifting crowd is but an additional weariness. If the weather be cold, the draughts are greater; and if it be hot, the heat is felt just as much in an American car. We had begged E. to get us places in the ladies' car,

where we might be safe from tobacco and its attendant horrors. What was our disgust, on entering, to see spittoons placed all along the aisles at every two or three seats! We thought we had made a mistake; but no! this was the ladies' car. The seats were stuffed and covered with handsome French rep, and the window-frames were prettily inlaid with light and dark wood; but what comfort was that? Gentlemen are allowed to travel in the ladies' car as much as they please. They may not smoke, but they may chew—and spit. And they do it. So much for the ladies' car.

I observe that here every place is a city—never a town. I have taken some pains to find out what it is that constitutes a city in America. Is it the possession of a cathedral, Catholic or Protestant? No; not exactly that. Is it some ancient charter, dating from the reign of Queen Anne? Not exactly that either. E. supplies me with an answer which you must take till I can meet with a better. It is having a saloon, a bar-tender, a one-eyed man, and a lame dog.

There seemed to be greater activity in Lynch-

burg than in Norfolk. The town—city I mean—is all up and down, and possesses various smells, of which the most prominent are tobacco and molasses. The display in the shops is about equal to that of Norfolk. All day a crowd of negroes sits at the corner of the principal thoroughfare, grinning, chewing, and gossiping. I asked what all this crowd did for a livelihood. After inquiries in various quarters, I learnt that these were for the most part gentlemen living at ease,—not gentlemen of property precisely, but quite as comfortably off as if they were. These were the cooks' husbands! There was only one thin nigger in the crowd. He was a little shrivelled creature, white-haired—white-woolled, that is—for a wonder. I suppose he had a few brains more than the common run of his fellows, and tried to think sometimes; and so his wool turned white. As he sat huddled up on the kerbstone, he looked just like a little old monkey. He could have had but one wife, because he was so thin. The fat ones must have had two; and the very fat, oily ones, three wives at the very least. By going in for a

plurality they get so much more varied a diet, it was explained to me; also change of air, in moving about from one wife's residence to another. I was told that it was no uncommon thing for a slave to ask his master to sell him when he and his wife did not "get on" together, or when he had fallen in love with another woman. If the master refused, he would beg that the wife might be sold. The request was not often attended to, of course, unless the woman showed herself such a termagant as to raise a tempest outside her own cabin. Since the emancipation, servants very rarely sleep in the houses of their employers. Of course where there are children the nurse remains altogether; but else, after the last meal is over, they all leave the house and go to their own dwellings, mostly in the lower part of the town, crowded and filthy. If a knock comes to the front door after that, it must be answered by the master of the house. This is thought nothing of; and indeed, for some months of the year—from mid-April, that is, till mid-October—the house door stands open all day till bedtime, unless it is

raining. Outside there is generally a big porch or verandah, big enough to hold half-a-dozen chairs, besides side benches. Here the family congregates and spends the better part of each day, and the ladies exchange visits. Many of the houses are surrounded with gardens of more than an acre in extent, and a paddock besides. I saw cows roaming about the streets, or lying peacefully at back doors, waiting to be milked. Hens and chicks scratched in the dust-heaps, and scudded out of the way of an occasional vehicle. There were a few new houses building in the higher part of the town; but in Main Street—the old original street—I saw lots still occupied by miserable wooden shanties. Little white children in embroidered frocks were running about barefoot. The heat is so great that they turn restive in shoes and stockings. They generally have very good features, black eyes, and well-cut, well-defined lips and chins. There is no chubbiness about them, and seldom any colour. The grown-up girls are exceedingly pretty,—sometimes quite beautiful. Rosebuds there are in plenty, but

alas for the full-blown roses! Is it the climate, the constant use of cosmetics, the hot bread and soda-biscuit eaten twice a-day? What is it that makes all the women such ghastly, white-lipped, haggard creatures? Many of them have that half-starved dead look I have observed in French nuns towards the end of Lent. Yet food is cheap: the best beef that can be got here—and it is very fair—is ten cents = 5d. per lb.; and everything else is in proportion. E. declares that the hot bread, soda-biscuit, dyspepsia, and quack medicines, are to thank for this almost universal ghastliness. He considers them much less delicate than they look. He says that the climate is not conducive to superfluous flesh, but that they are all wiry, the women as well as the men. The men must be made of iron, truly, to stand the smoking, chewing, and dram-drinking they do. But my own opinion, formed after a little acquaintance and talks on the subject with various women, is, that hardly a woman in the country enjoys sound health. Perhaps tight lacing and high-heeled boots may have something to do with it: but so it is.

We were to have stayed in town till A. was ready for us; but the hotel was so noisy and the heat so great that we protested. Then E. found rooms for us in what was described as a quiet family hotel. Once installed there, I went into the ladies' parlour, where to me comes an individual wearing a black hat—an individual of such dark and ferocious aspect that, in my mind, he instantly became Legree personified. As Legree, after a remark or two, inquired whether I found my room comfortable, and sat down as if he intended to remain, it dawned upon me that he must be the master of the house. As it was a novelty to be in the company of such a person, I thought I would stay a while, and see how the creature behaved, and whether I could get any information from him. I had all the while an uneasy feeling in my mind that, if this were not the man who whipped Uncle Tom to death, it must be his first cousin. He, however, did not wait for me to question him; he began to question me. He began by asking to what part of the country we were going. When it appeared that the neigh-

bourhood to which we were bound was the very neighbourhood in which he was "raised," he became quite affable, as if already a mysterious bond connected us. As he came from a tobacco country, I tried to draw him out on tobacco-culture. After telling me something of it, he felt so friendly that he drew a spittoon towards him, and began using it vigorously; while he questioned me about myself, my belongings, my forefathers and collateral ancestors, and whether I had left my beau behind or brought him out with me. When it came to that, I thought I had seen enough of the manners and customs of the family-hotel keeper, and retreated to my room.

The questions were amusing, sometimes. One day a lady at the hotel asked M. whether she had ever seen larger cities than Lynchburg. M. replied, modestly, that she thought she had, and named a few, such as Paris, London, Munich, Brussels, Florence, Milan, Norwich, Liverpool, Geneva, Cologne. Were all those cities in England? the lady asked. Not quite all, M. said; and abstained from pouring out any more useful

information. The same lady told M.—speaking of a certain Englishman who had bought an estate not far from Lynchburg—that she did not think he was a gentleman, for she had seen him many times in the street, and he never seemed to wear any jewellery. This lady used to come down to breakfast in a print dress and bib-apron, with a sham necklace of large yellow topazes, ear-rings and pendent brooch to match.

On the whole, I think we found everybody very good-natured and kind,—certainly more anxious to be civil than we English at home are to utter strangers. Nobody was ever tired, or bored, by our asking questions: or if they were, they managed to hide it very cleverly. Books and papers were lent us to while away the time, by a Virginian gentleman whom we only knew by name. Taking a walk one morning, M. stopped at a garden-railing to admire a magnificent *Magnolia grandiflora* in front of the house, and a Wistaria running along the whole length of the verandah, with a main trunk as thick as a man's wrist. What a climate! M. exclaimed. The lady of the house saw her

admiring the garden, came out, picked some China roses, and gave them to her.

Naturally, everybody to whom we talked was anxious to know our impressions. Generally, before long, the point-blank question was put: "How do you like our country?" I once ventured to hint that I did not like the smoking and chewing, and wondered why the women—who, being American women, could do exactly as they pleased—did not put a stop to it.

"Well," was the reply, "befo' the wo', people were mo' particular; but now, I reckon, they've got lax, and let the gentlemen do as they like. You see, so many of our men were killed. Many women had hardly a relative left."

It seemed as strange to them that one should be able to go into an hotel at home and order a meal at almost any hour of the day or night, as it did to us to see a placard stuck up in conspicuous places, to the effect that the dining-room was open at such-and-such hours for breakfast, dinner, and supper, and that no meals were to be served in rooms except in cases of sickness.

Sometimes the question was varied, thus: "I suppose you find things quite different from what they are in Eu—rope?" On one occasion the inquirer was a Virginian of good standing and education. I am not sure that he had been in Europe, but he had been up North, and liked the North, though he had done his full share of fighting as long as the war lasted.

"There was one thing," I said, "that struck me disagreeably at first. It was to see the black waiter put down white plates on the dining-room table. I felt myself looking instinctively to see whether his thumb had not left a black mark."

The Virginian could not see it. How should he, having been surrounded with black servants from his babyhood?

"But there are other differences, surely?"

"Yes; the various kinds of fancy-bread,—the fritters, waffles, and various cakes made of buckwheat or corn-meal. The lavish way in which ice is used is very delightful. There is one thing which seems strange, though I do not find it precisely disagreeable: that is, the way in

which fish, flesh, fowl, vegetables, and butter are placed before each person, in a semicircle of long oval dishes. I have had thirteen such portions placed before me at once. I do not mind it, as long as nobody insists on my eating them all at once."

(Virginians—and Northerners too—make an *omnium gatherum* on their plates before they begin. "Won't you take some more on your plate?" they say to a guest, who is eating only one kind of meat—say roast-beef—when there is chicken on the table. It is hospitable, but inconvenient.)

"I wonder," said the Virginian, "that you should consider our hotel custom of serving up in the small oval dishes strange. It is done in your own country."

I was forced to admit that I had not been a very great traveller in my own country. Still, I thought that were it the universal custom, I should know it.

"I know for a fact," he said, "that your Queen has her breakfast served to her in that way."

"Indeed! I have not more than a bowing acquaintance with the Queen," I said. "I have never had the honour of breakfasting with her Majesty, therefore I cannot say that such is not the custom at her private table. I only know that it is not the custom at ordinary English breakfast-tables."

"Well, it is so at the Queen's table; and I will tell you how I know it. Do you know a Mr Stephenson, a journalist?"

I replied that I had not the pleasure.

"It was he who told me. He knew, because he had breakfasted with the Queen. He said she had her breakfast fixed exactly like that."

I said, that of course settled the matter. The Queen was very much in the habit of asking journalists to breakfast. Nevertheless, I ventured to assert that this system of the semicircle of dishes before each guest was not truly English. It must have originated in this way. English people were very particular. The Queen, of course, being an Englishwoman, was most particular. Unfortunately, she was obliged to marry Prince Albert, there being no English-

man eligible at the time. Now Prince Albert was a foreigner, and everybody knows that a foreigner always eats with his knife, and then sticks it into the butter. Now, to see Prince Albert sticking *his* knife into *her* butter was more than the Queen could stand. So she sent for the Mistress of the Robes and the Master of the Horse and the Clerk of the Kitchen, and ordered them to order Minton to have those dishes made. That was how it was, no doubt.

The explanation was received.

This reminds me of a story told me by a New Hampshire man. He had an uncle some years ago who was living in London. To this uncle came, at various times, citizens of his own State, desirous of being put in the way of seeing everything in the most expeditious manner. One day such a tourist comes to him and says—

"I want to see the Queen."

"Nothing easier," says the New Hampshire man. "She happens to be in London now. You be in the Park, or at the palace entrance, at such an hour, and you will see her driving, or returning from her drive, as the case may be."

"Oh yes, I know that; I've seen her. But I don't mean that. I want to see her socially."

Having lived some time in London, the New Hampshire man knew the customs pretty well. Said he: "Oh, if that's what you want, go to the back door of St James's Palace and leave your card. Then, as soon as the Queen's at leisure, she will send for you."

The citizen left his card at the back door; but the Queen was busy or bothered about something just then, and he was obliged to return home without seeing her—socially.

We did not stay long at the family hotel. The filth, the smells, and the vermin, combined with the heat, were so unendurable, that we protested again. E. had been up the river to see A., and had returned with an unfavourable report. A. was living in what the Estate advertisements described as "a log-dwelling with two rooms," and there was no room for us. He had marked out a site (subject to approval); but when he should get the house built he did not know. The bare fact of that one English

steamer being advertised to touch once a-month at Norfolk, had sent prices up so, that he despaired of getting a contract taken on any reasonable terms. Already he had paid for a pair of weedy horses twice as much as they were worth, at the normal prices of the country. He wished us to try a third hotel; but we insisted on going up the country. We were sick of noise and smells,—we were pining for fresh air,—we were longing to be seeing something, doing something. With some difficulty A. at length got us a promise of board and lodging at a farmhouse about eight miles higher up the river than his own place. The people were English—new-comers, like ourselves—and they would take us in as a great favour, and for a consideration. We accepted joyfully.

Early one brilliant, blazing morning we set off in the canal-boat drawn by mules, which took travellers up the river—made, when feasible, to do duty as canal—three times a-week. The river and the scenery grew prettier and prettier with every mile. Sometimes the banks widened and we seemed to be on a lake; sometimes we

were shut in by high cliffs covered with lichen and moss and beautiful ferns,—we saw large patches of maidenhair reaching to the water's edge. And always in the background was the beautiful Blue Ridge, melting into the sky. We felt happy that our new home should lie in such a lovely country. Every minute we were making fresh botanical discoveries. Now it was a clump of kalmias, now one of rhododendrons —the tall lilac kind, which grows so well in some parts of Cornwall; now it was a fern resembling the Blechnum, now a beautiful vetch with pale-yellow keel and pink wings. There were our old friends the Virginian creepers, golden rod and Michaelmas daisy — not in bloom as yet, though; their time of flowering is August and September. As we came nearer the mountains, water-lilies filled the ponds below the footpath; and where the banks receded, the catalpa and Judas-tree became more frequent. These reminded us of sojournings in France and Italy, and filled us with all sorts of delightful ideas. There were wild vines, too, hanging in festoons from tree to tree, crawling

over the rocks like big snakes, knotty, gnarled, looking as old and tough as the rocks themselves. We said, for the hundredth time, What a climate! We did not know then, but learnt before very long, that the grapes on these wild vines have the most horrible foxy taste imaginable. One kind, *Vitis ripara*, scents the air like mignonette when in flower; it bears a small grape. The other, *Vitis vulpina*, has quite a large berry. I do not know which of the two has the more unpleasant flavour.

About the middle of the morning we passed a place where the banks were very low, and covered with reeds and marsh-grass. The river here became quite a small shallow stream, running through what seemed to be rather an extensive marsh,—good for snipe, possibly; and suspicious as to ague. I inquired whether ague was not known in that part; but was informed, with a smile of pity, that there was no ague in the whole of this section. My informant spoke, it may be, in ignorance. Not long afterwards, the wife of a lock-keeper told me how she and all her family had suffered from ague in that

very place—Bald Eagle; how they all lay and shook, quite helpless; and how some of the neighbours who lived in a safe place "'way up" used to come and nurse them on their bad days, and "fix up" things for them, even to baking their bread. Also, how at last they were so bad, that a sister of hers came from "'way out in Indyanna" to help nurse them; and how she, too, took the "chills," and had 'em so bad that she died after she got back home. However, as we found afterwards, such unwholesome spots are rare, and ague is exceedingly uncommon in the section known as Piedmont. In tide-water, where the banks are low, and there is a great deal of swampy land, ague is taken as a matter of course: nobody can escape it; so everybody makes up his mind to shake for so many days in the year. People ask, "Have you had the chills?" just as they ask, "Have you been bathing?" at Brighton or Dieppe. An English lady from Amelia county told me how she laughed at people who asked, "Have you had the chills yet?" "Why should I have the chills?" she would say. But one Sunday at church, in the

middle of the service, she began to shiver and shake, and her teeth to chatter, and she was obliged to go home and go to bed. As E. and I had both had Mediterranean fever, I knew we should get ague on the slightest provocation. It was reassuring, therefore, to have our future home pointed out on a high plateau, rising abruptly from the river, by A., who came galloping down to welcome us, and accompany us for a mile or two on our journey. Hereabouts the land rose abruptly, and showed evidence of good natural drainage, — so much so, indeed, that, as we found later on, there was danger, in some places, of its being washed into the river during the violent summer storms. But was not that better than such an Eden as Martin Chuzzlewit and Mark Tapley found?

Some time in the afternoon the boat stopped to put us off. We were told it was a landing-place. It did not look like one; but we got off. A. had assured us that a waggon would be in readiness to take us and our belongings to our temporary lodgings, a couple of miles or so from the river. We looked in vain for the waggon.

The boat went on, and there were we on the bank; and clouds were beginning to pile themselves up on the top of the mountains in an ominous manner. Seeing a group of buildings at a little distance, we walked on in that direction to ask for shelter. The side of the dwelling-house next the canal was fenced in, and inside the fence was a garden—a perfect wilderness of hollyhocks and roses. There was a General Jacqueminot, six feet high, and a Noisette rose with a trunk as thick as my arm. Standing in the doorway was a charmingly pretty person, who came forward to welcome us and introduce herself. She was the wife of an Englishman who had bought an estate not far from A.'s, and who was now busy building a house. We were presently introduced to the mistress of the house —a tall, dark, gaunt, dried-up woman, with grey unkempt hair. Iced water was brought by a bare-legged negro girl, who stared and grinned at us in quite a friendly manner. We had scarcely sat down, when, lo! a sudden darkness, a terrific peal of thunder, and a downpour as of a million bucketfuls. We thought ruefully of

our boxes out there on the tow-path, and of the family portraits. The picture-case had been so shattered by the flinging about it had had (I learnt then, that in America the people we call porters are called baggage-smashers), that we had thought it would be safer with us than with the heavy cases which were to come by freight-boat. We found, however, that the Virginian lady had been good enough to send a black to put our things in the lumber-house when she saw the storm coming. In less than a quarter of an hour the sky was brilliantly blue again. For a fortnight from that time we had a thunderstorm regularly every afternoon or evening; and there were two or three deaths from lightning. M. was out in a fearful storm, on horseback, carrying a hen and chickens she had purchased; but fortunately she came to no harm. The horses are accustomed from their colthood to be out in these storms, and do not mind them at all. If they go under a tree to escape the violence of the rain, they sometimes get killed. We were told that, if overtaken by a violent storm, it was best to lie down flat on

the ground; if there happened to be a creek near, the best and safest place of all was *in* the water. The shelter of a tree, or even of an umbrella, might prove fatal from its attracting the lightning. It was thus that the deaths occurred of which we heard.

When the storm was over, we were told that the English farmer's "hand" was come to fetch us with the waggon. The house to which we were going was formerly the inn at which the stage stopped, which ran from Lynchburg to Lexington in the days when there was no canal. Since the canal had been opened,—some thirty odd years, that is,—the road had not been repaired—much; but it was a very fair road notwithstanding. "It had washed, some, and it was catawampus here and there,—sort er bias, you understand. Still, a mighty good road."

We started. The first thing that happened was M. falling in a heap against me, followed by the trunk she was supposed to be sitting on. We righted. Shortly after it was my turn. I saw the picture-case sliding, and tried to stop it; fell over it, and knocked my nose. M. de-

clared she must get out and walk. I represented that it would show more real family feeling if we remained where we were. If things came to the worst, we should at least have the mournful satisfaction of being smashed up with the family portraits, instead of knowing that they were being destroyed in the waggon, while we were safe on our feet. There was something in that, M. agreed, so we held on as if we were at sea in a gale of wind.

"M.," said I, "how is it you are frightened now? You were not frightened on board the steamer, even during that fog when E. advised us not to undress one night, as he expected something would happen."

M. was mournfully watching bits of the gilt frame mouldings which were bobbing up and down on the floor of the waggon. "Oh," she said, "that was a mere nothing compared to this. How long is this going to last?" addressing the driver.

The driver—a six-foot Kentuckian who drove standing—answered, with a grin of delight at M.'s distress, that the road had washed here-

about, some; there had been so many thunder-storms of late. But as soon as we got to the top of the hill we should find there was a right smart bit of a good road. This was the turn-pike to Lexington, and it was a right good road when it was worked—*i.e.*, mended.

The best bit we passed over that day was nineteen degrees worse than the road from Pont d'Espagne to the Lac de Gaube in the Pyrenees. But we remembered that the country had only been "settled up" for about 270 years; also, that we must not expect to find imperial roads under a republic. So we stopped our grumbling, and held on tight.

We passed through a grove of mighty chestnut-trees, with an undergrowth of vines that seemed to be centuries old. Where an opening let in the sunlight there grew knots and clumps of smaller trees—dogwood, witch-hazel, and a very beautiful tree with a spray of feathery-like white flowers, called sourwood. Sweet-brier was growing by the wayside, and a pink single rose, very dwarf.

By-and-by we got to the top of the hill, and

saw before us a rolling country, partly cleared, with the Blue Ridge still in the background. Where the uncleared land was, there were chestnut, oak, and juniper. The clearings were a tangle of dewberry, creeping sorrel, chamomile, ox-daisy, and a large white Calystegia with a pinkish-purple throat, which I thought very lovely then, but which I look on now as a great pest, owing to its creeping perennial root. All these were signs that the land had been scourged till it could produce no more. The creeping sorrel shows that land wants lime — nothing more. But wherever an expanse of chamomile and ox-daisy is seen, there is mourning and woe for the purchaser. The land was very red too, showing that every particle of *humus* had been washed out of it.

The house stood on the top of the hill, a little way in from the road, on a patchy green, with a row of locust-trees next the fence. The farmer's wife, in ringlets and muslin, came out to welcome us, followed by the farmer in his shirt-sleeves. We were informed that a yellow girl had been secured that morning, and (oh welcome sound!)

that tea was ready. There had been dinner on board the boat, but the place and the people were so uninviting that we had preferred to go without. This kind of squeamishness is not conducive to comfort when travelling in out-of-the-way places. We were now absolutely ravenous from the mountain air. We ate cold rusty bacon and lively cheese as if they had been delicate French dishes. Tea being over, the farmer's wife tinkled a hand-bell for the yellow girl to come and clear away. No answer. The farmer went to the parlour-door and called. Silence in the kitchen. Yellow girl was called high and low, by her name of Cleopatra, but answered not. On inquiring of the mean white people who temporarily occupied part of the house, it turned out that Cleopatra had been seen going down the hill an hour ago. "I reckon she won't come back, nither," said the woman who had seen her go. "Them yella gals is jes' the meanest trash I I'd a heap suner have a real cullud woman that's bin raised good. Now that gal, she was mad 'cause Mis' T. made her scrub out that room upsta'rs. She ha'n't bin raised tu du no scrubbin',

so she jes' tuk off; an' my opinion is, you won't see her no mo'."

Yellow girl never did come back. We heard afterwards that she "despised" scrubbing and cleaning, and doubtless Mrs T. was as well without her. We also heard—but that was later still—that the Virginians in that neighbourhood had set going the report that English people never paid their "cullud folk," and beat and ill-treated them; so that the negroes looked on the newcomers with suspicion. Mrs T. made several ineffectual attempts to hire a black woman, but at last gave it up in despair. I cannot say we minded much. Our souls were of that base, grovelling description that we preferred doing housework ourselves to seeing it badly done; so we were quite ready to help Mrs T., even in "the meanest chores," as long as we remained.

We did not remain very long. There was great difficulty in getting anything to eat. A Virginian woman who had undertaken to bake our bread—an art of which we, as well as Mrs T., were totally ignorant—struck for higher pay. Her tithe was a third—*i.e.*, she would

bake three loaves, and keep one for her trouble. At the end of a week she said that was not enough. The neighbours round—few and far between—asked fancy prices for the few miserable vegetables they could furnish. Milk and eggs were dear; a stunted skinny chicken was 25 cents = 1s.; the only fruit was dewberries. There were wild black cherry-trees on the place, but they were full of black hornets' nests, and it was not safe even to walk under them. We were tired of rusty pork and lively cheese, and the mountain-breezes kept us as hungry as ever; sea-air was nothing to it. So down we came, in spite of A.'s remonstrances. "We don't know when the house will be built, there are such endless delays. You could not possibly exist in a log-house! Couldn't think of such a thing for an instant. You would be *awfully* uncomfortable. Besides, as soon as it is known that you are here, people will be coming to call. There are neighbours, though you say the country looks so empty. Now, how could you possibly receive any one—in a log-house?"

(You see Mrs Grundy had settled in Virginia before we came.)

I suggested that we might place chairs under the paradise-trees, where callers could see the site of the house E. was going to build. We might also give a family portrait a chair, and learn whether that would mollify Mrs Grundy. But A. could not view it in that light. He repeated that it was impossible.

I suppose it was because it was impossible that we did it.

I had been told, while staying at Mrs T.'s, of the ignorance of the negroes in managing cows. They milk thus: they take a little tin cup or bucket, holding a quart or so, in the left hand, crouch down, and milk with the right. If the milk is more than fills that tin, they go and fetch another. The cow is never trained to stand still; so, if she "feels like movin' aroun'," the milker has to follow her, and begin again as soon as she chooses to come to a standstill. I have seen them milking the cows thus while it was raining and hailing. The mean whites milk in exactly the same way, but they some-

times milk the cow dry: a nigger never does. Consequently, a cow milked by a nigger generally goes dry for six months of the year. Now that would not suit us at all. I therefore declared my intention of learning how to milk a cow. How I should learn I did not quite know, unless I got it from Stephens's 'Book of the Farm,' which E. had bought just before leaving England. However, I had learned how to swim from a 'Boy's Own Book', belonging to one of my brothers, and surely learning to milk from written instructions could not be more difficult. I was met by a chorus of "ohs!" from Mrs T. and an Englishwoman who was lodging there. She too was a farmer's wife. I do not know whether her husband had been a tenant-farmer like Mr T., but both the ladies were very fine ladies. One of them—so I inferred—had been distantly related to the housekeeper of some lady of rank, and it was the cheerfulest thing in the world to hear them talk so understandingly as they did of the English aristocracy.

So when I said I was going to milk the cow, they said, "Oh!"

"A young lady milking! What would people think?"

"You are quite mad to think of undertaking such a thing."

"You will repent it, if you do."

"You will spoil your hands."

"You should not calmly throw away your prospects in life."

"What prospects?" say I. Looking out of the window I see that a pet sow belonging to Mrs B., the mean white woman, has pushed open the front gate with her nose, and is busy rooting up the sod. Also, that a troop of chickens have discovered a quantity of rare and lovely ferns which I had, as I thought, hidden carefully in a shady place—viz., the hollow trunk of a locust-tree. I give a sigh to my ferns, already drooping and dying in the sun. I believe the two farmers' wives misinterpret the sigh.

"You ought to have a very good chance of settling," says one, smirking and bridling. "You seem to have had advantages."

I keep a high horse, though I seldom ride it. I felt inclined to get up now. However, I

waited a little. "My good soul," I said, in my sweetest tones, "do you really think that I came out here to marry a Virginian? In the first place, I have not seen a Virginian gentleman since I landed. I suppose there are none in this part of the country, or else they have all gone on a tour to Europe. Not that it matters in the slightest degree."

"Ah, you should not say that. It does matter. One day, maybe, you'll be sorry to have been so particular. There's so-and-so, and——"

I was getting irate. "At all events," I said, "don't you think I had better wait till I am asked? Now then, I am going to milk that cow—when I've got her. Couldn't you give me a hint or two how to begin?"

"Never did such a thing in my life!" they both exclaimed together.

"And did you never make butter,—really?"

"Never!!"

"Never!!!"

"Well—but,—just for fun? Just to see how it was done?"

"Oh dear, no!"

"Oh *dear*, no," said Mrs T. "Why, when we were out in Australia even, I had two servants, and everything comfortable round me. And I should never have thought of interfering with the dairy-maid's department when Mr T. was farming in England. Of course not!"

The principle of non-intervention is very fine —sometimes,—with neighbours' business, for instance. I thought several things, but did not say them.

I thought, for example,—"I wonder, my good women, whether your interfering a little more—and perhaps doing a little more—in the dairy-maid's department, would have kept your husbands farming in England now, instead of having to transplant themselves out here and take fresh root, no longer in youth, but in their middle age? I wonder whether it is the fine-ladyism of the tenant-farmers' wives that is at the bottom of the hard times of which the tenant-farmer is complaining so bitterly?"

LETTER II.

When we got down to A.'s, we found ourselves in the midst of a den of thieves. The prices were famine prices for everything we could possibly want to buy. Green apples, which were selling in town for a dollar the barrel of three bushels, were sold to us—we taking the trouble of fetching them—at a dollar the bushel. A small square of coarse soap—just such a piece as you would give out from the storeroom for scrubbing purposes—was charged 10 cents = 5d. When we tried buying by the pound, we found that the storekeeper sold $\frac{3}{4}$ as 1 lb.; so that, while we paid for, say, 6 lb., we only received $4\frac{1}{2}$. We remonstrated, but were informed that that was the custom. Butter was charged 25 cents = 1s. per lb.—the pound being like the soap as to weight; whereas the price had been

never known to be higher in summer than 10 cents for the pound of 16 ounces. Milk, of a very poor quality, was 10 cents = 5d. per quart, and we had to fetch it ourselves, while in town it was carried round to the doors for 8 cents. Potatoes, which had been exposed to the sun while digging — green, acrid, uneatable — were charged to us a dollar the bushel: in town they would not have been saleable at 50 cents. We had a small patch of Early Rose potatoes in a field,—and delicious they were; but they were partly stolen,—and what were used by us were used so wastefully that they did not last long. It seemed very petty to order how many potatoes the cook was to dress every day; but I found that such close supervision was highly necessary, if any stores of any kind were to last the proper time. No negro knows how to take care of anything eatable. These are just a few instances which occur to me. I do not know whether I have quite "got over," even yet, the wholesale robbery of our household gear. We dared not lay linen out to dry or bleach unless one of us remained on guard. Two valued

family miniatures, with gold backs, disappeared mysteriously while supposed to be safe at the bottom of a certain box. I did not know then —what I know now—that nigger women keep false keys, and know how to use them. A.'s cook and housekeeper had these, and a capacious pocket besides,—a receptacle for flour, sugar, coffee, and anything else that came handy. W. found, on balancing accounts, that, at the prices charged, and at the rate of the daily robbery, we were living at a greater rate than we did when our own family was twice as large,—in a city of southern France, where we had every luxury, including excellent fruit and wine.

We used to be astonished and amused at the way in which people would come and ask for things. I suppose, in their minds, it was a kind of "spoiling the Egyptians." One day a man came and asked E. for some pine-wood to make a baby's coffin. E. gave the wood, more amused than shocked at the request. We heard afterwards that a "right pretty" coffin had been made of it, and that they had stained it pink with poke-weed berries. This poke-weed is the

Phytolacca — a tall, handsome plant which grows in fence corners. It is a "mighty useful" weed, they say. The blacks and mean whites search for it in spring, and use the young growth as greens. I am assured that, when boiled, it makes a "right good sallet." An infusion of the root is given to ailing pigs, and is used as a fomentation for cows afflicted with garget. There are many herbs and roots which are used as medicines here, and which are gathered and dried by the more thrifty among the white people,—such as horehound, catnip (something like penny-royal); May-apple (Podophyllum) and lobelia, used for pigs and cows; chamomile, white-pine resin, white-oak bark, slippery elm, pink-root, snake-root, sarsaparilla, and a host of others. The older negroes are well acquainted with these herbs, but rarely take the trouble to gather them—preferring to trust, in case of need, to some white neighbour's store. As soon as it became known that we possessed a medicine-chest, we were besieged by applicants for remedies—not by the blacks only, but by the mean whites. If a baby had a fit of colic, they

would send and ask for laudanum, instead of giving it the perfectly safe and innocuous catnip tea. This amateur dispensary work went on till I administered a dose of aloes to somebody (not a baby). After that applicants became fewer. They became fewer still as soon as they found out that we would no longer give them whisky. I am amazed now when I think of the cool impudence with which all and sundry used to request "a dram." On looking at our accounts, at the end of three months, we found that the whisky had cost us more than our food. E. said that must be stopped at once. M. and I were quite willing to have it stopped. It was not as if the expenditure had been for something nice, like Lund, or Sauterne, or Moselle, of which we could, with great gusto, have taken our share. But whisky,—and corn-whisky too!

"It must be stopped at once," said E.

"That will be very difficult," said A. "Everybody knows perfectly well that you have a keg in the house. They will think it uncommonly odd not to get a dram if they ask for one, or even if they don't ask for one. It is the custom

to offer a dram when you have whisky in the house."

"Then," said E., "we will leave off having whisky in the house."

So that leak was stopped; and we were "nane the waur."

We had felt cheerful when thinking of A.'s cook and housekeeper. We had said in our ignorance, "Poor, dear fellow! Now he will have something like comfort." We did not feel cheerful after we had made her acquaintance. She took toll of everything — family portraits included. But that was an excusable frailty. It had been explained to us that the negroes, knowing they and all they had belonged to their masters, thought that all their masters had belonged to them; and could not get over this confusion in regard to *meum* and *tuum* all in a hurry. It has always seemed to me that the reason people steal is because they like to steal. However, we would not have minded the stealing so much had that been the only fault. What we objected to in particular was the habit Mrs Housekeeper had of leaving everything for us

to do. Before we came she never made A.'s bed; she never swept the floor; she never removed the table-cloth till it was time to wash it; she never cleared the table till it was time for the next meal. After we came, as soon as the house-building was fairly begun, E. found it necessary to order his meals at the same hours as the workpeople had theirs, as they wasted their time completely if they thought he was out of the way; so breakfast was ordered at six and dinner at twelve o'clock. Needless to say that we never got either meal at the proper time. Sometimes, in despair, M. or I would go out and hurry things by helping in some way or other. That made everything worse for us in the end, as Mrs Housekeeper thought if we did some we might as well do all—feeding the pigs included. Yes! Rather than hear those poor pigs squeal with hunger, M. and I have carried out the pail of dish-wash to them! I know now that if A. had said to the woman, "If you let those pigs go hungry, I'll drive you off the place," the pigs would have been attended to. But in those days we were buying our experi-

ences fresh every day. This woman was supposed to do A.'s washing, ironing, and mending. Alack! he was reduced to mending his socks himself. As to the ironing,—not being able to procure a good ironer in the neighbourhood, I undertook the task myself, and was thankful that my education had not been considered complete till I had learnt how to starch and iron in France. A. was unwilling to let me have the trouble; but I represented to him that Mrs Grundy might possibly say something if he went on wearing unstarched, unironed shirts and coats, now that I was come. He said that perhaps he might have had his linen got up by the miller's wife and daughters, but the doing it would have been considered a great favour on their part, and would no doubt have been highly charged. And he must have shaken hands with the wife and daughters every time he saw them, and—worse than that—would have been expected to make himself agreeable! So that, on the whole, he preferred to wear his things rough-dried. I quite agreed with him.

There was just one thing that A. insisted on.

He insisted on having the floors scrubbed once a-week! Mrs Housekeeper "despised" scrubbing floors, though her name was not Cleopatra, but Jenny. The trouble A. had, the objurgatory epithets he was forced to use, I won't detail.

We tried—naturally—at first, the civil way of speaking in which we had been brought up to speak to our French and Italian servants. It did not enter our heads that because these servants were Africans, with bullet-heads and black wool instead of hair, we need be less civil to them than we were to Marie or Eugénie, Luigi or Maddalena. But we soon found out, to our sorrow, that that way did not do at all. Such gentle phrases as, "Be so good as," "I should like you to do so-and-so," were not only useless, but injurious here. To have an order obeyed it must be given as an order, with no doubt whatever as to the imperativeness of the mood. When they have learnt who is the master, they will obey gently-worded behests, perhaps; but certainly not before. Begin with such formulas as, "I should like," "Please do so-and-so," and the chances are that they won't like and they

won't please. I have, however, never been able to break myself off the habit of saying, "Thank you," for any service rendered me personally. Whenever I said "Thank you" to Jenny—which was but seldom—she used to stare at me as if she thought I was going to mesmerise or "trick" her. But when I say "Thank you" to Aunt Caroline, she says, with a surprised gruffiness, "You'se welcome." In what I have been saying, you must understand that I have spoken of the great mass of the blacks—those who were children and young people before the emancipation—not of the very few old, trained family servants, who become fewer every day. I have seen one or two of these, charming in manners, and thoroughly respectable in appearance. They can imitate just like monkeys; and I suppose the habit of mimicry—as to good manners and polite speech—continued long enough, becomes second nature. But nothing can be imagined more disagreeable, more repulsive, more uncouth in manner, than the negro left to his own untrammelled, untutored nature. On one occasion when M. was trying to get something

ready for dinner—Jenny having spent the whole morning in her cabin, while we had supposed her to be in the cook-house—I opened the door just in time to hear her tell M. very roughly to "get out of her way." We had borne a good deal of sulky incivility from the creature, thinking always that she knew no better, but this was more than I could stand. I rushed at her, gripped her shoulder, and shook her violently.

"If you dare speak in that way again," I said, "I'll tell Mr A. to shoot you. *And he'll do it.*" After that Jenny was as civil as she knew how, as long as she remained with us.

We had great trouble to teach the blacks that if they wanted us they must come to the door instead of to the window. I do not know anything more startling than to see a black face and a pair of rolling eyes in the dusk looking in on you. One evening M., who was filling the sugar-basin at the sugar-barrel in the corner, was startled by a gruff voice saying, "Wish you'd gimme some sugar." This was from a nigger woman who was passing by, and had put her head in at the window. M. generally

took her bath in fear and trembling, knowing that it was more likely than not that Jenny would burst into the room as soon as she was disrobed. We have had trouble in teaching others better than Jenny how to behave in this respect. Some English acquaintances were much annoyed by a negro servant getting in at the window of their room, to get a jug or some such thing. Mrs —— woke and shrieked, thinking it was a burglar. Mr —— woke, and used unparliamentary language. "Don't be skeered," the woman said, laughing heartily; took what she wanted, and got out of the window, back to the verandah whence she had come.

A. was in his way as glad to get rid of Jenny's husband as we were to get rid of Jenny. He did not steal much, but he was so incorrigibly lazy, that if he could help it, he would never cut up enough feed for the horses and oxen. In consequence, A. and E. made it a rule to remain in the stable all feeding-time. Here more than in any country, perhaps, it is the master's eye that makes the horse fat. If A. and E. happened to be absent, I visited

the stable as their deputy; if both were away at night, I always made my rounds with the stable-lantern, protected from real or imaginary burglars by all the dogs and cats of the establishment.

I can hardly tell why we were so happy that summer, living in that tumble-down log-house, full of hornets, and mud-daubers, and bugs, and wasps. Perhaps it was that fine fresh dry air that kept us up. Certainly it was not the food, for that was horrible. The staple was pork: pork cold, pork hot, pork fried, pork boiled. We used to buy fowls sometimes—chickens they called them. Everything is a chicken, be it six weeks old or six years. I believe our coming must have been a godsend to the neighbourhood. All the skinny old hens that had been scratching for a bare livelihood till they were past laying, were sold to us at a shilling apiece. We bought live fowls to fatten, but they got the cholera from Jenny's fowls. We tried to get fresh meat from town, and found it answer very badly, as we had neither ice-house nor larder to keep it in. We were told that nobody in the

neighbourhood would kill till the fall—*i. e.*, autumn; so we were forced to be content. Worse than the want of fresh meat was the want of good bread. Ours was generally uneatable, and I had not then learnt how to make it properly; yet, somehow, we were all in good health and high spirits. I certainly enjoyed finding a new fern as much as most people enjoy a new novel; and many a Virginian was as good, to us, as a number of 'Punch.' But though botany is a pleasure, one cannot live on it; and though a hearty laugh is an excellent thing, one cannot laugh all day. And we had some terribly real annoyances. But let me tell you about the bread.

I undertook the bread-making in sheer despair of ever getting Jenny to make it fit to eat. It happened to be just the one thing I knew nothing about. I had receipts, of course. There is a very good one in that nice little book, 'Farm of Four Acres;' I also found receipts in my grandmother's cookery-book, published in 1812. But, good as these were, they were useless, because I could not get yeast.

One day E. brought me some packets containing a white substance called Horsford's Mixture, which was to be added to the flour in certain proportions; was declared—as per analysis—to contain all necessary constituents for building up a good strong bony frame; also to be far more wholesome than bread made with carbonate of soda, saleratus, or any other kind of baking-powder. It may have been all that was necessary to build up the American bony structure, but it was a dire penance to our English stomachs. I never tasted a bread more unsatisfying. A. and E., who were busy out of doors all day, used to declare they felt more hungry after eating that bread than before. It tasted simply like raw flour. Then A. said we must try corn-cake. Corn-cake was very good indeed, when properly baked. We tried corn-cake. As we got it, it was simply a mess, burnt outside, and raw in the middle. Jenny used to bake her cake in the ashes, and wash the ashes off in any water that came handy—dish-water as soon as not. As we did not choose to have our food prepared in such a

dirty way, why, we might go without. Then I tried to make what they called "salt rising." It is a thin batter of flour, salt, and water, set to rise gently by the fire, or by sun-heat. I never succeeded once. Then I tried to induce the wife of the nearest lock-keeper—a very respectable old woman—to make our bread "for a consideration;" but she was not poor enough to wish to take the trouble. I heard of people, "'way yonder over the mountain," who made their own yeast, and had "light bread" every day. Bread made with yeast is called "light bread," to distinguish it from soda-bread. How I envied those people! Later on, the lock-keeper's daughter gave me a receipt for yeast-cakes. With great difficulty I procured a small quantity of brewer's yeast to start with, and thought my troubles were over. But I did not know all the mysteries of bread-making yet. I had to learn that yeast has its ways, too; and that it is inert when old. There, however, that interesting and comprehensive work, Stephens's 'Book of the Farm,' came to my help. From it I learned how to revive old yeast. How

overjoyed was I to find that bread made with this renovated yeast did rise! I had become quite sceptical and low-spirited about bread. I never quite knew how a loaf was going to turn out. Sometimes it rose, making a splendid "kissing crust;" and that made me feel so proud, that I was almost inclined to have it carried in procession, like Cimabue's Madonna. But I could not say that my next loaf would not be everything that a loaf should not be, casting me down into a valley of humiliation. Then M. advised my trying leavened bread, as the French make it. I made it in that way for a long time, and it rose, certainly, and was wholesome and satisfying; but sometimes it turned sour the second day. At last an English lady, living a hundred miles off, sent me a receipt for potato-yeast, and a little bottleful of her yeast to start it with. Now I hope I shall have no more bread difficulties as long as I live. But bread is such a mysterious thing that I cannot feel quite sure. Here was I, supposed to be rather well educated and accomplished, knowing how to cook a good many toothsome French "kick-

shaws," from *fricandeau* to *marrons glacés*, and yet what discomfort we all underwent!—getting actually dyspeptic for want of the staff of life, which I knew not how to cook. Was it not humiliating? It is all right now, of course. But through how many and unaccountable failures have I worked my way to the mastery of the art of good bread-making! Ruskin says, I think, something about the necessity of a girl being taught how to make a pudding. With my experience, I should say that to learn how to make bread was far more important. Did I, when dreaming among picture-galleries, ever dream that I should want to know how to make bread? Yet precisely the knowledge I lacked was the knowledge I wanted first.

I said we had a few annoyances. For instance: A. having a field of oats round the house, had penned up the pigs. The pigs did not like it, of course. Virginians would have let their pigs run in the road and find out the weak places in the neighbours' fences; but A. was altogether too "high-toned" for that, so the pigs were penned up, and Jenny ordered to

feed them, which she did "once in a while," I suppose, as they did not die in the pen before we came. However, the very morning after our arrival, on looking out of the window about sunrise, I counted seven pigs in A.'s oats. The iron immediately entered my soul. I rushed down, called Jenny, and started with the dog for a chase after those pigs. We drove them out triumphantly. About an hour later, mentioning the fact to A. at breakfast, he said—"'Why, they must have come back again, for I saw any amount of pigs out there just before I came in. I must go round and look at the fences. There must be a weak place somewhere."

So A. went round and looked for weak places, but found none. And the pigs came in every day; and sometimes a cow or two, or a few calves. "It is very extraordinary," said A.

At last an old negro, wanting to curry favour probably, said—"Tell you what it is, Mas' A., dey folks aroun' dey jes' lets down a rail or two, so dem ar pigs kin get through. Dey would not do dat to Mas' Seccam over yonder,

now, 'cause dey knows he'd as soon shoot 'em as not. But dey doesn't think you'd shoot 'em, so dey doesn't car'."

"If that is really so," said A., "I shall try what a little shooting will do. The crop is not so good that I can afford to let all the neighbours take toll in this way."

A., however, put off the shooting from day to day, and the pigs came in and stopped all day and went home at night, till the time came for the crop to be harvested. May I never see such a crop again!

"It was extraordinary!" said A. Everybody had told him such wonderful stories of the crops which had been raised on that very land.

Yes; everybody had told him wonderful stories of the crops. Singularly enough, everybody had omitted to tell him that the land had been cleared for thirty years, and had been producing maize, wheat, oats, in succession, without a season's respite, or a particle of manure or fertiliser of any kind, except, it might be, a handful of wood-ashes in each "hill" at maize-planting time.

"Our land wants no manure," was the universal vaunt. "Nobody ever manures land, except for a cabbage-patch." "We don't make manure, because we don't want it." This is what A. and E. were told on all sides, when they went round trying to buy manure.

E., who has the precious gift of thinking *inside* his head (I know some who do their thinking outside), tried to get at a few bottom facts with regard to this wonderful land.

"Sir, you will find no better wheat-land in the U-nited States."

"Yes, sir, that is a right good piece you have there on that flat."

"It won't take clover," says E. "It's not good enough for that."

"Is that so? Wal, s'pose it's been subdued, some."

"What do you call good land? What is your standard? You call this good wheat-land. What number of bushels should it average now, per acre?"

The Virginian paused. The question was presented to him in a new form. They never

trouble themselves about acres. They know how many bushels they sow, and they know how many they thrash out. At last he said—"Wal, reckon 'twould bring five for one."

"Five for one!" said E., aghast. Here was a "bottom fact" with a vengeance.

"Wal, sir, yes; I reckon 'twould not be less than that, unless the chinch bug got in it; and then—why you might as well plough it under. But Virginia wheat is thought mighty well off, I tell you. Befo' the wo', there was quite a big trade between Virginia and Brazil, just in barrel-flour. Virginia flour don't heat going across the line, like other flour."

This is a fact. And I am glad to hear that the flour trade, ruined by the war, like everything else, bids fair to flourish more than ever. But this "five for one" was a damper to us for a long time. No book, no pamphlet, that had fallen into our hands respecting Virginia, had given such a clear idea of the utter impoverishment of the land as this "bottom fact," five for one. True, it was mentioned casually, in these glowing descriptions of climate and

products, that "worn-out fields when allowed to rest became covered with a dense growth of white pine in a few years." Also, that "worn-out land was quickly renovated by sowing a crop of clover and turning it under, green." I do not remember reading anywhere that most of the cleared land (not river-bottom) is impoverished to such an extent that it will not take clover! Pea fallow was mentioned casually, too, as being "a great favourite with some farmers." We had not then heard that phrase applied to land,—"So poor it won't even sprout peas." That is the highest expression of land exhaustion attained by the agricultural mind here. Fortunately our land would sprout peas. Had it not been so, we might perhaps have found it cheaper to pull up stakes and go somewhere else. But bear in mind that our land was not the only exhausted spot. Things are getting slowly better: a few Northern men are settled here and there, whose views are sound as to feeding the land, however they may require reconstruction as to the crops peculiar to the South. I may say the same of a few Eng-

lish. But I think I may say that when we came, a large proportion of the cleared land a hundred miles around us was fully as worn out as ours, and a great deal of it was worse.

Well, we did what we could. We bought up what little manure there was to be had to begin with. From the balcony we can see now, when the crops are green, the exact place where it was put, because of the greater depth of colour and greater length of straw. Also, seeing sheep's-sorrel growing everywhere, we got lime. I think I learnt from Johnston's 'Elements of Agriculture' that the appearance of this plant was a sign that the land wanted lime, just as the colt's-foot is a sign of there being plenty of it. We got a good deal of light from the "Agricultural Report for 1871," printed by the Agricultural Department at Washington for dissemination by Congressmen among their constituents. This department in itself is considered by many people to be a gigantic swindle; however, I won't go into that now. The reports are fair enough, though I do not see why the nation should be taxed to pay for

the publishing of them when the same could be got by a moderate payment on the part of the individuals who want agricultural information, by subscribing to the 'Country Gentleman,' or the 'American Agriculturist,' both excellent serial publications; or to any of the serials edited by such thoroughly capable Northern men as Curtis and Mecham. However, this "Agricultural Report on the State of Virginia," not being published with a view to attract the unwary foreigner, told the sad plain truth as regards Virginian farming and its effect on Virginian land, without any *couleur de rose* at all. Had we read it before coming to Virginia, I do not say we should not have come, but we should most certainly have laid our plans on a totally different basis. We should, for instance, have known that so much must be expended per acre to make the land productive; and more than that, that so many seasons must elapse before we could expect it to be productive, even to the extent of paying its own taxes. As it was, on reading such items as the following, our ideas became considerably enlarged :—

"*Rotation of Crops, Tide-water District.*—In the counties near Richmond some attention is being paid to this subject, but not so much as before the war. In Charles City county the subject receives no attention, the farmers having many of their former slaves living on their lands and cultivating on shares, which prevents due regard to improvement. In York county no attention is paid to the subject; and this remark applies to the other counties forming the peninsula. No progress of any kind is made, but the movement is backward. The negroes constitute four-fifths of the population, who cultivate a large portion of the land, either on shares or for a money rent. They raise no crop but corn (maize), the average yield of which is about six bushels to the acre. In Essex county very few farmers practise any regular course. King George county ditto. Prince William county: Little attention given to alternation, owing to the impoverished condition of the farmers. The report as to Fairfax county is encouraging; as to Fanquier, still more so,—indeed Fanquier is almost the only county mentioned as having

permanent blue-grass pasture, which improves with age. The report for Surry county, Southampton, Isle of Wight, Lunenburg, Nottoway, and Appomattox is, Agriculture at a low ebb; Campbell: Nothing being done towards an improved system of culture. On the contrary, the best lands are severely cropped to meet the immediate wants of their owners. Patrick county: This is another tobacco county, situated in a remote and retired region, with no marked facilities. The system of farming is rude and primitive; no attention given to the alternation of crops; the term is hardly appreciated."

And so on, through the long list of ninety-two counties, with a very few exceptions. Anybody with even a smattering of agricultural knowledge, can tell that where neglect of rotation is the rule, impoverishment of the soil must be the rule too: any woman who has ever kept a dozen plants in pots could tell that. Why was not this portion of the "Washington Agricultural Report" printed for dissemination abroad? The report as to the introduction of labour-saving implements was equally gloomy.

But, as in this case their non-introduction was put down to poverty rather than to prejudice, we were but little impressed, and not at all depressed. Once make the land produce good crops, horse-rakes, mowers, reapers could easily be bought. Just for the present, however, we were "Edened," only without ague; and that was something to be thankful for.

I go back to the experience of our first summer as regards crops and pigs.

After the oats were gone, the pigs ceased to trouble that field; but there was a crop of maize growing in another field at some distance from the house, and there began to be weak places in that fence. The old negro who was employed to hoe the crop, told A. that "So-and-so's pigs was in dar all de time."

When E. heard this, his face became as grave as if he were going to sit on a court-martial. He did not say much; but he and A. walked out, and a quarter of an hour later we heard two shots. When they came back, A. said—"If you hear anything of pigs being missing or hurt, you need not make any remark."

I did hear of one pig, which went home very poorly indeed, but ultimately recovered; also of another, which, being a sow, and consequently of a pertinacious disposition, *would* come into that field in spite of the warning given. I heard that our dog and another dog named Jefferson Davis set upon that sow, and fought her and vanquished her so that she retired to a dark corner under the kalmia bushes by the branch, and there died. All the dogs of the neighbourhood assembled to render her the last honours; and what the dogs left the turkey-buzzards finished up,—there was always a gang of fifteen or more sitting on the old mulberry-tree down by the branch, waiting for such wind-falls. The strangest thing of all was, that the word was passed round from one pig to the other that our fields were not safe grazing-places, for we were troubled no more.

We had a crop of Winnigstadt winter cabbages, of which I felt rather proud, because I had helped to plant them under a burning July sun. There were also some pumpkins of fair size and quality; and we looked on these as our

"stand-by" in vegetables for our first winter. One night a neighbour's cow came in and ate or spoilt about a hundred and thirty. A. remonstrated. A few nights later she came in and finished the crop. There was some private talk of shooting that cow; perhaps she might have got a shot in her—by accident; only we felt sure that her successor would prove just as bad. In short, E. bought that neighbour's land in sheer self-defence. There were about eighty acres of nothing particular to eat, so who could blame the cow for coming after cabbages?

I have learnt since, that when once a cow smells cabbage, the moral sense in her becomes totally annihilated; she has no more feeling of rectitude than a dipsomaniac.

Seeing such a poor prospect of winter vegetables, E. at my urgent request rode to town to get two pounds of turnip-seed. It was getting too late then to hope that they would make their full growth, but we thought they would be better than nothing. He went. The morning after his return I opened the package, intending to go out and sow the seed before the

sun became too hot. What was my dismay on finding that he had been given beet-seed! He had with difficulty spared this day, and could not spare another, so we had to do without our turnips. As I knew the appearance of the various garden-seeds perfectly well, no storekeeper would have ventured to impose on me. But I should never have been allowed to ride sixteen miles and back unattended, so it was no use to wish I had gone myself. I heard of just such a case of carelessness in the dealings of the same storekeeper with a poor market-gardener near town. (This was *the* seed-store of the place, remember.) Sometimes we were told, if cabbage-seed was sown about 15th September, the plants would be strong enough to stand the winter with the protection of a little brush. Then they can be set out quite early in March, and, if the weather is reasonably favourable, and the sort a good early one, such as Little Pixie or the best Early York, there will be a crop fit to market early in June. But one week too late in sowing makes all the difference between success and failure. Well, this man sowed, and

waited for ten days, or more; then the seed came up, and proved to be turnip. It was too late then to sow, so he lost his crop. Of carelessness in business matters, another instance occurs to me. E. had sent a $100 note to a tradesman to pay a small bill, desiring him to keep the balance, as we should soon be wanting more things from his store. A fortnight later, he sent down by post a list of articles, desiring that they might be sent up immediately by boat. They did not arrive. Next mail-day brought a letter stating that the firm declined to do business unless the cash was sent for the goods. This obliged E. to take another ride of sixteen miles and back, to find out what had become of the $60 odd left in these people's hands after paying his last bill. The junior partner was surprised,—had heard nothing about any such balance. E. insisting strongly, inquiry was made. Then it appeared that it was "all right;" the senior partner had the balance, but had forgotten all about it. This seemed to us an eminently unsatisfactory way of doing business.

As I had brought out a nice little collection

of kitchen-garden seeds from Carter's, I was of course anxious to begin gardening as soon as possible; so I asked A. where it would be convenient for me to have a temporary garden-plot. "Oh," said A., with a fine comprehensive sweep of his arm, "anywhere—anywhere you please. There's this flat, forty acres, and any amount of hillsides." This *carte blanche* sounded very fine indeed. A. had in the spring planted a patch of cucumbers and tomatoes down close to a branch (small running stream), out of sight of the road, where the land, being what is called branch-bottom — *i.e.*, alluvial in character—was capable of producing fairly. However, as I had gone to that patch more than once, and returned with an empty basket, because the negroes had been there before me, I chose a piece of land which was within sight of our temporary dwelling, and which had been fallowed. There I sowed all sorts of things. I find, from my gardening book, that in the beginning of July I sowed such peas as King of the Marrows, Champion of England, and Beck's Prize-taker; besides onions and lettuce of sorts,

and tall and dwarf beans. The beans did well enough: I have the dwarf kind now, the Dun Dwarf, and a very good bean it is. The Drumhead lettuce I also have, and find it as good as any. The onions came up, but were eaten by a neighbour's sheep. The peas grew about a yard high, and were then eaten by the obnoxious cow. However, had she not eaten them, they could not have come to anything. I should know better now than to sow even dwarf peas in July in this climate. Moore's vegetable marrow did very well; so did the Lord Napier melon. I sowed this, 15th July, on a small heap of manure, as I knew enough of melons to know that I could not expect them to produce anything on land which, to my unsophisticated vision, was a wretched worn-out clay, let the natives vaunt it as they might. On the 14th August this melon was in flower. Ward's Nectar seemed more delicate; it wanted more moisture, and became covered with the green aphis. We had a couple of melons of the Lord Napier kind, and then—— A Virginian who wished to speak to A., seeing him out in that direction, rode

straight towards him through my garden-plot. I don't know whether he wished to make his horse show off, thinking A. or E. might buy the beast; but this I know, that for the five minutes he remained talking to A., his horse was prancing and curveting over my tiny melon-bed. Naturally, by the time he rode off, the plants were done for. The peas and beans came into flower a month after sowing; but the former were soon attacked by mildew. Fortunately I did not sow all my flower-seed, as none of it came up. Of course I know now that it had no chance; for the ground, besides being poor, was a veritable oven. Imagine the heat, when melon-seed would sprout in two days! Speaking to some one of the failure of my seeds, and the probable cause, I was gravely informed that I must have sown when the moon was wrong! I do not quite know yet—being obtuse regarding signs—whether I ought to have sown at the "dark" of the moon or at the "light" of the moon. An old man being asked by E. one day whether he had planted his potatoes, replied that he was waiting "till the moon was squar'."

They never ask, Is the soil right? Is the season right? but, Is the moon right? This also applies to cutting hair and making soap. It is never the wrong proportion of lye and fat, but the moon, that causes failure in soap-making here. Of course all the white people are not so foolish; but I have not yet met with one mean white who was above this degrading superstition. The better informed will tell you that, dubiously, So-and-so never takes any 'count of the moon, and says he gets as good crops as any man. But as a rule, they shake their heads at those who disregard the moon, and look upon them as if they were freethinkers, hardly safe to deal with. All our failures were put down to our rash disregard of the "light" and the "dark" of the moon.

So much for my first attempt at gardening. The rest of the flat was a tangle, a wilderness of dewberries, white calystegias, lavender-blue convolvulus, and sassafras bushes, besides plants and bushes of which I know not the names. I thought it lovely then; but I soon learnt to dislike the sight of such loveliness—a sign of scourged land and disgraceful farming.

LETTER III.

I HAD hoped to be able to write a letter all about snakes,—especially about rattlesnakes. I had gone on hoping all through our first summer, for we heard a great deal about them, and I really did see two big moccasins,—one I nearly stepped on while reaching for a tuft of pretty wild grass; and the other nearly frightened me out of my wits by coming suddenly round the corner and rearing up at me as I sat in a friend's verandah. This one was four feet long, colour black and dirty red. He was soon despatched by a blow with a long pole; and as I looked at him, dead, I hoped the next would be a rattlesnake.

But no rattlesnake have I yet seen, or heard of, except as being "'way over the mountain." And I begin to believe that there are none left, and that the rattlesnake stories one hears are

mere bugaboos concocted by the natives and told to astonish or frighten foreigners. Besides the moccasin, of which there are two kinds,—the common one which I saw, and the copperhead,—there are the garter-snake—a small, slender thing, about two feet long—and the black snake, a yard long or more. The copperhead is said to be more venomous than the common moccasin. I have just been told by an acute and intelligent observer, that the copperhead, if caught so that it cannot escape, in its fury strikes all round till it strikes itself, when it dies instantly. My informant had himself witnessed this on one occasion. The shape of the head, which is more cobra-like than that of the common moccasin, would indicate that the copperhead is extremely venomous. The garter-snake is said to be as deadly as the moccasin. However, the cats kill them; and I am told that pigs are expert snake-killers. I have been asking Aunt Caroline to tell me her experience with snakes,—in particular, I wanted to know what was the best thing to do, supposing one were bitten by a moccasin. Aunt Caroline says that

somebody must instantly run and kill a chicken, cut it open, and place it hot on the wound. "You hev to be peart, o'coose," she says. "Don't you think," say I, "that the poison might enter the wound before the chicken could be caught? Suppose the chicken were 'peart' too? Here it takes three people to catch one chicken."

"Wa—al, you hev to be peart," is all I can get out of her. I cannot but think that the chicken remedy must be as efficacious as the pigeon remedy mentioned by some old writer—*i. e.*, "a live pigeon cut asunder along the backbone, and clapt hot upon the head,—a most proper medicine in the phrensie, headache, melancholy, and gout,"—and I know not what besides. The best medical authority I know of declares that alcohol is *the* remedy for snake-bite. Aunt Caroline will not allow that there are no rattlesnakes. She declares that they used to kill one in her "ole mas'er's yard, 'way yonder in Amherst, every year." They also used to kill one every year in Mr ——'s yard,—her ole mis' son-in-law, that lives two miles off. And she "hearn an ole cullud man say" they kill

one every year up at ——'s farm, in the mountain. This farm is seven or eight miles off. Will no rattlesnake ever come nearer? Aunt Caroline says a rattler always rattles three times, to tell you to get out of the way. If you do not get out of the way at the third time, he rattles no more, but strikes. The black snake, she tells me, is the master of all the snakes. He "wraps round" the rattlesnake till he has broken every bone in his body. He only bites in the month of May; but he will "wrap round" you at any time if you don't get out of his way, and press you to death. Clearly apocryphal, this. The biggest black snake I have seen yet was not half the size of my wrist, and could not have been more than four feet long. This snake is said to be an excellent vermin-killer,—better than any cat. That it is fond of milk and cream I know. It is no uncommon thing to find one in a pan of milk of a morning, or even drowned in an old-fashioned deep churn. I cannot tell why they should drown themselves thus, when they are perfectly well able to cross creeks; but so it is.

Of wild beasts, properly speaking, I believe there are none left. I am told that, in Brunswick county, there are yet the remains of wolf-pits constructed by the early settlers; and there is still in existence the law awarding $5 to the wolf-slayer on production of the animal's body. But nobody seems to have any knowledge of a wolf ever having been caught. The way they dug the pits was thus: the hole was contrived so as to be much larger at bottom than at top; a stake was stuck in the ground, and another—a shorter one, on which the bait was hung—was fastened to it, so that the bait swung across the mouth of the pit. On the beast attempting to seize the bait, he was at once precipitated to the bottom, ten or twelve feet deep.

As for bears, if there are any yet in existence, they are "'way up in the mountains," with the rattlesnakes. Minks, opossums, and weasels abound in uncleared land, and are all destructive in poultry-yards. The raccoon is destructive to corn, and is much hunted by the negroes. The ground-hog has a long snout, short paws—hand-shaped—is twice as big as a

hedgehog, has a brown coat—so coarse as to be more like bristles than hair—and exhales a peculiar, earthy, graveyard smell. It is very destructive in corn-fields, gnawing at the corn-stalk till it breaks down, and eating the ear of the maize in the green state. The country people here have a strange legend about the ground-hog. They say he comes out of his hole on the 2d of February. If the sun is so that he can see his own shadow, he goes back, and does not come out again for forty days; and for those forty days we "humans" may be sure of bad weather.

Polecats are not very common, I am glad to say, for one of our dogs is devoted to hunting them; and whenever he has been after this game we are obliged to send him to Coventry for a week or ten days, and drive him from his usual lair by the door. Any spot where he does lie is carefully avoided by us until after a day's hard rain. The odour is like a concentrated essence of garlic, indescribably nauseous.

The skunk, like the rattlesnake, I have never

seen, only heard of. I have heard also that it is the farmer's best friend, and should be protected, being an indefatigable vermin-killer. I think, however, I should prefer a few extra cats. The first time we were annoyed by our dog after his polecat-hunt I asked a black woman, one of the field-workers, whether the smell of the skunk could possibly be worse. She gave one of those odd, strained nigger laughs, which seem to have so little enjoyment in them. "Ugh; ugh, ugh!" she said,—"oh—whey! Talk about skunk, polecat don't even begin to smell, I tell *you*, Miss Ma'y. No, sah! If a skunk on'y come nigh you, not nigh 'nuf fur to tech, o—o—oh—whey! You mout jes' tak' yer close right off an' bury them, I tell *you!*"

I am told that the Indians bury the skunk for a certain time before using it for food, as the earth "sweetens" it.

As far as I can learn, there are two kinds of fox indigenous to Virginia—the black and the grey. The black fox is said to be equal in speed and endurance to the red, which was imported from England in colonial times as

soon as the settlers became wealthy. There were several packs of fox-hounds in Piedmont, Virginia, descendants of those imported at the same time as the English fox. During the war these were mostly dispersed or destroyed; but now things are beginning to settle themselves again. The planters and country gentlemen are making efforts to get together good packs, and no doubt time is all that is necessary to that end. I have only seen one real fox-hound,—quite old, but still showing that he had been a fine fellow in his day. A pack of such as he must have been a splendid sight. I do not pretend to know a single thing about fox-hunting, but I should say that the fox had much the best of it in this part of the country, where it is all what they call "rolling," when not actually mountains; and where there are bits of wood and rocky uncleared land every mile or two, besides frequent creeks and rills. There are acres of kalmia brush on our own north hillsides, where a fox might bid defiance to dogs and huntsmen for many a long day. I have thought sometimes during my botanising

scrambles, that on such ground I might have eluded my pursuers had I been a hunted slave, for instance, or a proscribed Quaker in those good old times when any shipmaster bringing a Quaker to the colony was fined 5000 lb. of tobacco, and obliged to carry him away again; and when the same fine was imposed on any one who even harboured a Quaker "near his house." This kalmia brush of ours, interspersed with white pine, reaches to the top of a steep hill, where there is a level space, scattered with oak and chestnut, and an undergrowth of azalea, dogwood, and sassafras. Beyond this level space the hill dips abruptly, thickly wooded to the bottom, where it is cleared and cultivated. Close by the stream, which makes its way to the river, is a tiny log-cabin, with its accustomed fowl-house, rough stable, and pig-pen. A little way beyond you come to another hill, and here the stream divides. This hill is steeper than the first, and as yet uncleared; the north side, kalmia brush—the south side a dense mass of deciduous shrubs and trees, with here and there a lichen-stained boulder,

encircled, it may be, with Virginian-creeper. Now and then a blank, or rift, may be discovered in the dense growth: this is where a tree has fallen during a summer storm. Perhaps this description will give you a fair idea of the kind of country in which the Virginian fox was formerly hunted.

I remember reading with a shudder, in an account of Mrs Chisholm, how, when sleeping in a wooden shanty, which was provided her for the first batch of emigrant girls she took out, rats and mice ran across her face at night and woke her. Little we thought then, M. and I, that rats and mice would have high-jinks in our bedroom, the upper chamber of a Virginian log-house! They certainly did make themselves at home. At last I used to take Pluto (the black cat) up to bed with us, and as he was sure to be asleep when the rats and mice woke me up by scampering across my face, I used to toss him off the bed in the hopes of scaring them away. I have looked out of the window sometimes, and seen a grandfatherly rat sunning himself close to the wall, and Pluto eyeing him at

a respectful distance. We found that half-a-dozen well-fed—not pampered—cats were the best remedy for this evil. Traps were useless. These creatures were far too cunning and too keen of scent to touch a trap that had been handled by a human being. The cats also helped, as we found later, to rid the place of moles, garden-mice, shrews, and ground-squirrels. The last named is the prettiest little creature imaginable. Its fur is soft and shiny, and of a beautiful bright brown. Along the sides, from shoulder to tail, run stripes, one on each side, of pale brown and dark brown. Its tail is short and tapered, and its feet more like those of a mouse than a squirrel. It is about the size of a small rat, and is said to live on grain, seed-corn, &c. Whether the moles do good or harm is a vexed question. If, as their friends say, they eat the large white-and-brown grubs of various kinds of beetles which infest the ground, I should say their presence was an unmixed good. Some say that they eat the seed-corn. Perhaps both assertions are true. I did once, in Belgium, help A. to dissect a mole. He

smelt strongly of garlic, and in his stomach was some fibrous substance. No animal substance could we detect; but then we were very inexperienced naturalists.

Shall I be able to strike terror into your soul by telling you of all our stinging insects? There are quite enough of them to sting us all over and drive us out of the country; but somehow they don't do it. To begin with: in our log-house we had wasp-nests in the windows, mud-daubers in all the corners, and a large community of hornets which had set up housekeeping in a big log just above the door-frame long before we came, and which were not going to be turned out. Sitting silent in the doorway, we could hear them boring new galleries all day long. Sometimes we would try to discourage them by stuffing up their entrance-holes with bits of chip. It was useless; they only got angry and made darts at us, so we left off. They were a great source of terror to M. and myself, till we found that their principal occupation besides boring was catching flies. After that we hailed them as benefactors. They would pounce down

on the flies which annoyed us at meals, catching them on our heads or hands; and they never stung us, though we always felt as if they surely would do so. When they do sting, it is generally, though not always, by mistake. The sting is painful, but does not last long. The same cannot be said of the bumble-bee, which is more than an inch long, and has a sting barbed like a fish-hook, and extraordinarily painful in its effects. The smell of the creature after it has stung, or when crushed, is rank and very disagreeable. The wasps which built their hanging nests in the windows were the large brown kind, vicious when disturbed, but not otherwise. We swept their nests down, but they were pertinacious, and returned again and again. Once, finding a large nest with a quantity of grubs in the open cells, E. tried the experiment of feeding them with molasses, using the point of a pair of scissors as a spoon. They took to the molasses quite kindly; but as M. objected to our philanthropic experiment, it was not continued beyond a day. Besides this brown sort, there is a small ground-wasp, like the English wasp

in shape and colour; and a very large ground-wasp, whose sting is very vicious. When disturbed it flies at the forehead of the passer-by, and the sting is severe enough to stun a man. Before ploughing a field where these insects abound, the negroes are obliged to burn them out, else they would sting the horses to madness. They are handsome creatures, with yellow, orange, and black markings. The little potter-wasp makes a nest of clay, shaped like an ancient pot, which it fills with caterpillars.

There are two kinds of mud-dauber, one brown and yellow, the other steel-blue. Of the latter I know but little, except that it lurks behind chinks and gaps in wood-work, and comes forth in myriads on warm days. The brown-and-yellow kind makes a cell, sometimes threefold, sometimes solitary, of red clay, which it works with its mouth till it is as hard as brick. This cell is an inch and quarter long, and half an inch across, always corrugated obliquely outside, but quite smooth inside. At the bottom the mud-dauber lays one egg. As far as I can tell, the grub is fed with small spiders. When the grub

is of a certain size, the mother dauber fills up the cell with spiders, and daubs a dome-shaped covering of clay over the top. This creature has a sting, but is not vicious like an English wasp. The abdomen is sharp-pointed, black and orange-brown, much smaller than a wasp's, and separated from the thorax by what looks like a mere black thread, one-fifth of an inch long. There is another insect much the same shape, but larger, brighter in colour, and altogether more formidable in appearance. I do not know anything of its habits, having only seen it in and near weak hives. It is about two inches long. There is another stinging insect whose name I do not know, with a scarlet velvety back and head, small brown eyes, a sting a barley-corn long, wingless. Strange to say, I have never been stung once by any of these insects, though I certainly do not avoid them,—they inspire me with too much curiosity to allow me to run away, unless, for instance, I happen to be on horseback, and they show a disposition to attack. It happened so once to A. and myself, when we were riding by the

river one hot morning. A large colony of brown wasps were offended at our passing under their tree, and made for us *en masse*. Perhaps some one had been throwing stones at them before we passed. I do not know which was more frightened, my horse or I. It was a colt, too, which had only been ridden a few times. Fortunately my veil happened to be down, and the wasps did not pursue us very far. My secret desire is to find out exactly what kind of underground dwelling the large ground-wasp makes; but until I can smoke a long pipe I shall never know, because at the season when this wasp is about, A. and E. are far too busy to attend to such trivialities as smoking out wasps in an *amateurish* way. Perhaps it seems to you that all these insects must be a terrible annoyance, but I assure you that one very soon loses one's fears; one cannot long be afraid—very much—of what interests one. I will confess, however, to feeling still a few qualms in the matter of spiders. That is partly, I think, because I am assured that there is one kind which bites, and I cannot find out for certain which it is. There is a very

85359

large garden-spider, with a brown velvety back, which burrows in the ground; and there is a smaller one which makes a kind of nest in the ground about three inches deep, the sides being kept firm and dry by fine twigs laid in like basket-work. These nests are often found in grassy places. You see a perfectly round hole two-thirds of an inch across, with twigs neatly bound round the margin; and just inside, two bright eyes peeping at you. Could you resist the impulse to pluck a blade of grass and tease Bright-eyes? I never could. There is another spider I must not forget, he is so handsome. Imagine a head of polished jet, with a spot of brightest vermilion in the middle, and legs all round: there you have him. I am too poor an entomologist to tell you his name. I should not forget, either, to say that we have mosquitoes. They are not so annoying, however, as the Belgian mosquitoes; nor are they so numerous. As a set-off to them—our only *really* annoying insect—we have quantities of fireflies. It was indeed a delightful surprise to meet again these pretty creatures, which we had

not beheld since leaving Italy. Seen by day, the fire-fly is a rusty-coloured beetle with a pink head and a semi-transparent yellow body. They enter at night, attracted by the light; and other beetles enter too, which are not so welcome. There is a black one nearly two inches long, with prominent eyes that shine like garnets. There is another, about the same length, and nearly an inch across, black, with yellowish spots on its back, which they call—I know not why—the cow-bug. These creatures, and smaller ones of their kind, enter as soon as the lamp is lit, fly wildly towards the light, and then gyrate upwards, their wings sounding like the lowest note of a harp. They knock their heads violently against the ceiling, fall to the ground, and kick helplessly, till somebody is good-natured enough to set them right end upwards again. Of diurnal beetles I only know a very beautiful small one, with wing-cases of blue and red, velvet-like, which hides in stony places; the flying green-and-bronze "June-bug," about the size of a cockchafer; and the humble rusty-black "tumbledung."

Our birds will perhaps be more interesting to you than our insects and small mammals. We have two kinds of woodpecker, the larger being a very handsome bird, black and white, with a red head. We have, I think, two kinds of cardinal grossbeak, one much brighter than the other. There is a yellow bird, a little bigger and far prettier, to my mind, than the canary. I used to be pleased to see it, till I found by experience how destructive it was to seed crops. It is very pert and familiar, and will perch on a bush so close that you can almost touch it. They call it "yellow-bird," or "seed-bird." Then there is the cat-bird, so called because at one time of the year it makes a noise exactly like an ill-tempered kitten. Often, during our first summer in Virginia, did I wander through the wild vines and kalmia brush on a certain hillside, calling "pussy, pussy," in tones of blandishment, quite regardless of all my chances of being bitten by the moccasins which abound there, so certain was I that some poor kitten had lost itself, and was frightened and hungry. At last I saw the object of my solicitude, a rusty-col-

oured bird sitting on a peach-tree branch, and *mewing* loudly at me. The cat-bird is said to be a great grub-destroyer; but as I know it to be a great fruit-destroyer as well, in Virginian parlance, "I have no use for it." But I have the greatest use for the blue-bird, a dazzlingly beautiful creature, which is very common here, and a most indefatigable grub-hunter. The female has reddish feathers on the head, and is of a less brilliant blue, but still very attractive. I found a nest once in a piece of old stone pipe, just a few twigs of dry clover, laid with even less care than a pigeon's. There were two gaping yellow nestlings inside, and several big grubs, somewhat similar in structure to the grubs which burrow in the backs of oxen. Probably they were grubs from the oak-tree near, as the parent birds were flying to the tree and back to the nest all day long. The blue-bird has two songs: one sounds like a bar in "Der Freischütz,"—in the drinking-song I think it is; the other is only a call-note, "chirr-wee." Then we have a lovely bird called the "green sparrow." I think it is even lovelier

than the blue-bird, but it is not at all common. The cock bird is all over of a shining blue-green, quite a Peruginesque shade; but the hen is sober drab. It makes a neat nest, and lays five pale-blue eggs. The bird they call the robin is not a robin at all, but a kind of field-fare. It is twice as big as a robin, and the breast is a yellowish red. The golden oriole is seen now and then, but is not very common about this place. I have only observed one nest, hanging to the end of a chestnut-tree branch. There are plenty of doves; we hear them constantly on warm still days, cooing on the other side of the river, where there are steep wild rocks and plenty of old fir-trees. When riding about one often notices, in farmyards, a small box stuck on a long pole. This is put to induce the bee-martin to take up its abode there. Though hardly bigger than a swallow, it persecutes the hawk—flying above it and pecking at its eyes—to such a degree that its presence in a farmyard is a real protection to poultry.

I was of course anxious to hear the mocking-bird; and I am sorry to say that, now I have

heard it, I do not appreciate its song at all. It is a useful bird however, devouring voraciously all sorts of flies, beetles, and grasshoppers. There are birds which do not make half as much noise, it is true, and which do not imitate other birds, but whose song—what there is of it—is far more pleasing. There is one whose song is composed of three notes, precisely those three which begin Blumenthal's song, "The Message." There is the blue-bird, whose song I mentioned before; and there is a bird that begins to whistle a polka tune, and never goes on,—it is truly a tiresome bird. Then there are the wrens, pretty tiny creatures, with a few sweet little notes. Of birds whose notes cannot be called a song, we have the quail, or partridge, as they call it here. All the summer long you hear it in the corn-fields and in the blackberry thickets, calling "Bob White." I have often put them up in my ramblings. They fly heavily, with a whirr like a partridge. Their plumage is prettily marked in various shades of brown. During all the hot weather we hear the whip-poor-will, which begins at sunset, and

goes on far into the night, sometimes banishing sleep. I have often watched for it, but in vain. Whenever I have been close enough it has been too dark to see more than its outline. It makes a rough nest on the ground, and lays two eggs. Had I the naming of it, I should call it *whip-you-well,* for its note resembles these words much more than "whip-poor-will." At a certain distance the sound is just like a riding-whip swung backwards and forwards in the air by a strong wrist. But when you get quite near, the note sounds neither like a whip nor like words, and appears to be consequent on a violent expulsion of air from the suddenly-opened beak. It begins slowly, increases in speed, and at length becomes so rapid as to defy any attempt to count the single notes. Then it suddenly stops; there is silence for a minute, and you hear the same over again; but, apparently, a quarter of a mile off.

Our humming-bird is a very tiny green kind, not very bright, unless the sunlight happens to catch it. It is about three inches long from beak to tail. The ends of the long tail-feathers

are black, with a streak of white intervening between that and the green of the rest of the feather. They chase each other through the air, whether in fun or in earnest I can hardly tell; but it looks like quarrelling. As soon as the gladiolus and Tecoma come into flower these birds arrive. They become tame enough to settle on a flower-petal—if it can be called settling when the wings vibrate the whole time—within reach of the hand. Their food is insects, and perhaps honey,—or it may be the dew inside the calyx of cup-shaped flowers. I have observed that they never visit many-petalled flowers, such as the rose, the double stock, or double hollyhock, but are constantly seen on gladioli, lilies, and the Tecoma. I am told that, in Albemarle county, there is a red humming-bird; but here I have never seen it, though I have counted dozens of the green kind in the garden on a hot summer day. As it goes from flower to flower, it makes a noise like the squeak of a very small mouse. It utters the same squeak when chasing or being chased through the air.

Another creature which makes a strange noise

is the horned owl. If one does not know its voice, it is quite capable of making an "April fool" of one. Imagine my starting up in the middle of the night, and running to E.'s room, with, "Do take your sword, or a poker or something, and go and see! There is a woman being murdered down by the stable!" and lo! it was only an owl.

But the insects are the really noisy creatures. There is the thing they call the "jar-fly," for instance. It looks like an enormous fly. Its body is nearly two inches long, and thick in proportion; and it lives—happily for us—in the oak and paradise trees. If it were addicted to coming into the house, I really do not know whether I could stand it, it is so fat and unpleasant in appearance,—though, to give the creature its due, its wings are very beautiful when examined. It makes a noise like a watchman's rattle,—and a very loud, harsh, disagreeable noise it is. Fortunately it only makes this noise for a month or six weeks. There are various crickets, which chirp more or less; and there are three or more kinds of grasshoppers,—one a

very pretty salmon-pink, with dark markings. The true locust—which they also call "grass-hopper"—never makes its way so far east as this. The cicada is a beautiful grass-green in colour, and makes a noise like a file by rubbing its wings together,—just where the wings touch, near the shoulder.

The "seventeen-year locust"—a strange and curious insect—is also a cicada,—very swift, and difficult to catch. They are dangerous to handle, as the female stings—so it is said—with her ovipositor; and the effect of the sting is to produce tetanus. They lay their eggs in the bark of small branches; and the branch so punctured always dies. They are supposed to hatch, and the maggot to fall to the ground, and burrow to some unknown depth,—to emerge at the end of seventeen years. Other observers consider it more probable that they burrow in the trunks and roots of trees, and that the mysterious pear-blight which attacks pears grafted on quince is due to this cause. They are soft, dull, and stupid on first emerging from the ground, and have no spots where the eyes will be after

shedding the ground-shell. In half an hour after bursting the shell their wings are full-grown, and their bodies have turned brown. As soon as their legs are developed, they crawl to the nearest tree, and ascend it rapidly. They die about the end of July. There is a curious local legend about this insect. They appeared in this part of the country, it seems, in 1860. Now there is an old lady who lives "over the mountain," and she is a prophetess. There were swarms of this strange "grasshopper," and every one was marked on the back with a W. People took some specimens to show this old lady, and asked what it meant. And she told them it meant "woe." And, sure enough, the "woe" broke out the very year after!

LETTER IV.

MANY and long were our confabulations about the plan of the house and the size of the rooms. On ventilation and suchlike sanitary matters our minds were already made up; but on all other points we were for a while seekers after light. Should the house be built bungalow fashion, Swiss-cottage fashion, or how? We bought a useful American book about rural affairs, and tried to get ideas from the plans and diagrams of Northern country-houses therein contained. We were helped much by it in one direction—that is, we were speedily able to decide what kind of house we would *not* have. We would eschew, for instance, the "Cottage Gothic," with its upper windows in the roof, detestably hot in summer, and bitterly cold in winter. Nor would we have the "Swiss Subur-

ban," with its external covering of shingles cut to an ornamental pattern, "the frame being first covered with rough boarding, on which was to be laid tar-paper before applying the shingles." The probable cost of insurance was not given. We would eschew also the "Octagon Cottage," which would inevitably make us so angular in temper that in a twelvemonth we should want a cottage apiece. Self-respect would not have permitted us to build the "Italian Farmhouse," so "expressive of modest and refined neatness," and "intended for an intellectual family." Above all, we would avoid the "Tudor Gothic," and we would not have an observatory: we were not intellectual enough for that, being of the "early to bed early to rise" sort. Of one thing we were sure: we wanted plenty of room inside, no matter how the house looked outside. But even in the matter of room, we found that we must modify our ideas. The prices of everything had gone up so much since it was supposed that all England was coming out to settle in Virginia, that, when we came to calculate the cost, it appeared

prudent to have a less roomy dwelling than we had wished.

A. having been longer in the country than we had, gave it as his opinion that it was essential to have a guest-chamber, a large room for dancing, and a grand piano. I hardly know which was the most essential of these three, in a Virginian point of view. "Why," said A., "you don't know their ideas about hospitality! When any traveller sees the house from the road, of course he will naturally come in and expect to be entertained,—have a dram at any rate; and if it were sundown, of course he would put up his horse and stay the night. You should go to ——s and ——s, up at Buffalo River. They sit down to supper sometimes as many as fifteen or twenty at one table. They have one side of the house regularly set apart for guests. In fact, 'tis like an hotel more than a private house, only nobody pays anything."

"But," I asked, "how do they afford this expenditure? I thought everybody was ruined after the war."

"Don't know. Very likely they are hard up.

Daresay they sell some of their land whenever they have a chance. They do get along, somehow."

"They will be bankrupt one of these days," said E.

"Why, they are all bankrupt, more or less," quoth A. "I know of half-a-dozen within thirty miles or so who have had to take the homestead law."

Said E.—"I intend neither to become bankrupt nor to take the homestead law, if I can help it. To that end I think we will strike out guest-chamber, ball-room, and grand piano from our calculations."

A. looked dubious. "No guest-chamber! It will look—I can't tell you how it will look."

E. said—"If any Englishman or Virginian should come by, and I thought proper, I would cheerfully give him my bed and sleep on the floor. There are, of course, times and seasons when one would not turn out even a dog. But as to keeping open house for all and sundry, I do not even intend to begin to try it. We could not do it in Europe, and why should we

try to do it here? If every man would stay at home and attend to his business instead of riding about visiting, there would be less drinking, less debt, and less bankruptcy."

So the house was finally planned without any more rooms than we really wanted for ourselves. As E. said, it could always be added to on either side whenever he chose. As to the material, there was more discussion before we could decide what it should be. I wished myself for cobblestone, because I thought that a house of that material could easily be clothed with Virginian creeper, which was growing wild everywhere; or with English ivy, which requires care and petting here when quite young, but which makes itself at home when once it has taken a firm hold of the ground. Thus clothed, it seemed to me that the house would soon lose that brand-new appearance which is so unhome-like. Unfortunately for my idea, the cobblestones at our disposal — and there were tons of them on one part of the flat, as if a glacier or a river-bed had been there — were not hard enough for building purposes. They

had the strange property of crumbling into shales or coarse sand after exposure to the air. A hard rock cropping out on the hillsides might have answered, but the quarrying was too expensive to be thought of. There was at one time an idea of building the whole house of brick. E. had been strongly advised to do so,—to have the bricks made on the place. But as he could not be sure that the clay on the place would make good brick—for there is great difference in clay—and as he did not feel sure, either, that his adviser was competent to advise, he decided on having the house of wood, with a brick foundation, to be carried up the height of the cellar, on which the wooden framework was to rest. I own I felt doubtful when I saw the skeleton of the house, which was lifted up, I may say, bodily (there was no machinery used about it), and placed on the brick foundation. The sills were strong wooden beams, it is true, and the uprights were stout enough, and the boards—which were to be laid on horizontally, overlapping like tiles on a roof—were fairly substantial; but suppose we were to have a

tornado one hot summer afternoon, as they have in Kansas and other western States, and the house should be lifted up and carried away, perhaps into the river! I asked the white carpenter whether he felt sure it would stand, resting on the brick foundation merely by its own weight. He smiled superior, and said it would "last my time, anyhow."

Mem.—In America, as a rule, no man wants to build for posterity. It is considered mere waste of money to do so, when posterity can build for itself. There are houses in Virginia, it is true, which are built of brick, but such are mostly to be found in districts where wood has become so scarce that brick is now the cheaper material of the two, not because of any love of brick on account of its superior durability. Again, there are a few brick houses, relics of colonial times, when the rich proprietors had not the bricks only, but the door and window fastenings, brought out from England; and these are naturally pointed out with much pride. But I think the feeling is extinct which induced men to build such houses; or, if not

extinct, it is dormant. Before the war the spirit of conservatism was strong in Virginia. There was very little of that restlessness which characterises the citizens of more northern states,—that go-ahead activeness which seeks constantly an El Dorado, now in the West, now in the Far West, and again in the Farther West; and finds or misses it, as the case may be. As a rule, the Virginian seems to have found his El Dorado at his own door. He was content: "there was no place like Ole Virginny." Perhaps he who was loudest in praise of his own State was the man who had travelled least. But there was the contentment at all events. It reminds one of the French provincial spirit. A Gascon who has never left his own department except during his term of service, will assure you that there is no such blessed spot on earth as that department, and that in his miserable little dead capital (departmental) "one amuses one's self quite as well as at Paris." A Languedocien will say the same; so will a Provençal; so will a native of one of these locked-up little valleys in the Pyrenees. But

though the Virginian may still stoutly maintain that there is no State to compare to Virginia, there is a considerable exodus among the young men, who must get a living somehow. Before the war, a father could establish a son or daughter by giving him or her a few hundred acres of land, and a few slaves—servants they always called them. In a town a young man probably had his profession. In the country he had his overseer, who looked after the "hands;" he had his various country sports; horses were plentiful; stock multiplied as fast as was wanted; and if little cash passed through his hands yearly, life was easy, and he had money's worth if he had not money. Now it is all changed. What is the good of building a substantial house, when a man has one son in Colorado, another in Arkansas, a third in California; and when he knows that the fourth, who stays with him, would sell the old place if he had it to-morrow, and try his luck in some part of the earth's surface where the baneful terms "readjustment," "reconstruction," have no practical meaning? Doubtless the young

generation will learn more than if they stayed at home—they will be less narrow-minded, less exclusive; and yet one cannot but feel sorry at the extinction of that spirit of contentment which characterised a former generation, and which must, I think, have made Virginia a pleasant place for even a foreigner to live in.

To return to our own house. It had a low-pitched roof, covered with shingles made of chestnut, split rather thin. They looked "horribly" new and staring, so E. painted them with a composition which gave them a slaty-grey colour, and effected a great improvement. On the garden side we had a verandah, which A. said would make him a very nice summer bedroom. Above the verandah was a balcony, which gave us a pretty view of the river and the Blue Ridge. At the posts which supported the verandah and balcony we planted a winter-flowering jessamine, a purple clematis, a splendid pink rose, a Wistaria, and a *Tecoma grandiflora*, which last is perfectly hardy here, though it requires protection in the Northern States. I can hardly give you an idea of the

splendid mass of colouring these climbers make when in full bloom, especially the Tecoma. They do not, of course, all flower at once, but each in its turn—the clematis and the Tecoma coming last, and nearly together; while the jessamine is out of bloom by the end of March. Perhaps one reason of my admiration is that we brought them from England. As for the rose, though it is not strictly of a climbing sort, its growth is so rampant that it goes to my heart to prune it; and, indeed, it cannot be pruned quite according to the English gardening directions. Were I to cut back to "three eyes" I should have a mass of leaves, but never a flower. "Three yards," rather than "three eyes," is my epitome of pruning here. This is the case with nearly every plant and tree that I have had to do with. If it will not thrive it dies, and there is no more trouble about it. If it likes the climate and the soil, it grows so vigorously that the question is how to keep it within bounds without killing it. Thus one is obliged constantly to adapt and modify one's English and French gardening lore to suit the

climate, which induces such a rampant growth. I have had to make my own gardening book. I could not buy one, for the simple reason that I could never meet with one adapted specially to Virginia. There are hundreds of Northern books, and I know of one written for the climate of Georgia. But for Virginia not one. And yet Virginia is as big as England, and has been settled for two hundred and seventy years.

When the house was designed, E. made a plan for an ice-house at a convenient distance; and as soon as the ditchers had finished constructing the cellar, they were set to work at excavating the ice-house. When they had about half finished, they struck for higher wages, thinking that they had got E. in "a hard place." As it was, E. had been compelled to pay them highly to get the cellar dug out; for, though the log-house was well enough for one summer, when we felt as if we were picnicking all the while, it would have been unendurable in winter; and we should have been obliged to board at the hotel in town, which, in another way, would have been equally intolerable. However, the work of necessity

being done, E. was not inclined to make a further advance. It was getting rather late in the season, and the ditchers had imagined he would be in a great hurry to have the ice-house finished, so as to store it with ice for next summer. They were quite astonished when he informed them that he would finish it at his leisure. Leisure did not come quite at first, to be sure; but, however, the ice-house was completed after a while, and we all felt a kind of proud satisfaction when it was filled with fifteen tons of ice. Benches were laid along the sides, for milk and cream; and a stout, long stick or two was always kept in a corner handy for snakes.

A very old man—a man who was young in 1812, and could talk of the war time—came to see the house when it was finished. When he had travelled up-stairs and down-stairs and into the cellar—which he admired more than anything—he said to me, "Now you are 'fixed up' just as well as in the old country."

"What!" I exclaimed, pointing to the cook-house; "with a kitchen like that? At home we would not give a dog such a kennel."

"But it is mighty convenient, it seems to me."

"Where is the convenience? I don't see it," said I. In truth, the most incompetent European cook we ever had would, I am sure, on being introduced to such a cook-house, have instantly burst into a flood of tears and given warning.

"Why, here is this covered gangway you have had fixed up."

This was a temporary arrangement to prevent the dinner getting wet through if a storm happened to be raging just at dinner-time. Many people have the cook-house a hundred yards from the house, because, they say, the negroes are so incorrigibly careless about fire, that, else, they would be in constant fear of being burnt down. There is a great deal of truth in this. Very few Virginians insure, because of the expense. For this little cottage and its appurtenances we pay ten times as much as was paid at home for a brick house containing eighteen rooms, with stable, coach-house, and various other offices. Even with the feeling of security against total loss that insurance gives, we are

obliged to be as watchful as if uninsured, because of the inveterate carelessness of the blacks. No insurance could cover the loss of old plate, pictures, documents, &c. A Virginian lady told me she would not live in our house on any consideration, because, if the offices did catch fire, the house would be sure to go, as it was so near. But, on the other hand, what an inconvenience to have one's dinner wetted while carrying to the dining-room! These violent summer storms render umbrellas quite useless. Servants must get as drenched as the dinner. And in winter, how should we keep the dinner hot while on its way?

To return to our cook-house. It was the most tumble-down place you can imagine. The ends of the logs were like touchwood, breaking and crumbling at the slightest pressure. In some places they were quite gone, and the structure was gradually settling by the weight of the roof, —said roof being so full of leaks that whenever it rained I was obliged to do all my cooking under an umbrella. I mentioned these drawbacks to the old man. He smiled, and said—

"Well, I shouldn't wonder if the roof did leak, some. This is an old cook-house, too; it must have been built nearly thirty years ago, when this flat was being cleared. I remember it,—yes—and all those hills yonder, and all that land across the river,—thick, thick with trees. This cook-house, however, would be in better condition if they had barked the logs before putting them up. But I suppose they thought it would answer, anyhow. Well, you can easily put up a new one, you know, when this one gives out. Daresay it will last another year or so."

E. did not wait for the cook-house to fall. I was going to say he took it down, but I might almost say he kicked it down, so rotten was it. He made a kitchen to communicate with the dining-room, which was very convenient in many ways, though our Virginian friends shook their heads a good deal over the arrangement.

How glad we were when all the workmen were gone! Not that they behaved badly,—quite the contrary; but we seemed always to be in public as long as they were there. If we

were living in public, much more so was it to them. For weeks they slept under a shelter formed of sloping planks, and they cooked and took their meals under the shade of a paradise-tree. But they never felt the want of privacy as we did. It is strange how this desire to shut out intruders—for that is what it is—will cling to us English, travel as we may. I suppose the early settlers here were forced to put it aside, even though it were ingrained in them as in us; and their children, being brought up without privacy, never felt the want of it. I can in no other way understand the plan on which some Virginian houses are built. Some have the bedrooms all entering one from the other; —as bad, this, as the arrangement in many Italian houses, where the whole seems to be laid out as a set of reception-rooms, to be used as bedrooms when not otherwise wanted. Other houses I know here have the dining-room as a passage room, by which alone access can be had to all the bedrooms. We should inquire instantly, "How, in such a house, can there be isolation in a case of dangerous illness?" For-

tunately for the peace of mind of the dwellers in a house of this description, the question would never present itself to them. Yellow fever I believe they would avoid, but no other disease that I know of. A sick person is a personage for the time being, and all crowd to see him. The sicker he is, the more crowd; because it is nice to be able to say that they saw poor So-and-so "just before he died." If ever I am ill here, I shall know that I am quite given over when the whole neighbourhood, black and white, wants to come and see me. Some time ago there were two deaths following closely in a family—that of a father and daughter. The daughter was still very ill, though out of danger, on the day of the father's funeral. There was a very large gathering, and the people would go to the sick lady's room to shake hands and say, "How d'ye." A friend who was there found this out, and, being a sensible man, endeavoured to stop it by posting himself outside the room to keep visitors away. But, determined not to be defrauded of their hand-shake of such a very sick person, the visitors, seeing him keeping

guard at the door, went round and got in at the window! The consequence was, that the invalid, exhausted by the excitement, sank and died instead of recovering, as she ought to have done. People were rather surprised, because she ought to have felt cheered by seeing so many friends all in one afternoon!

While the house was building I was busy with my plan for the garden. As to space, I had *carte-blanche*, and very delightful it was to walk about and think over my scheme,—how I would have a clump of magnolias here, and a Paulownia there, and a shrubbery of specimen American trees between the house and the road, and so on. Beds of bright-coloured things, such as geranium and verbena, were to be placed where the sun should shine all day on them; and shady nooks were to be provided for lilies of the valley, blue lobelia, dwarf irises, hepaticas, azaleas, and other tender things which droop under the Virginian noon-day sun; not forgetting those woodland darlings, the wild pansy, the pipsewissa, and the partridge-berry (*Mitchellia repens*). For ferns there was to be

a special nook provided. And I must, somehow, get one of those gigantic tree-stumps which looked so ugly on the hill yonder that had not been long cleared, and place it somewhere on the grass where a tall tree would shade it; and I could put maidenhair and Lygodium, and the walking leaf fern and scarlet champion into the crevices, and surround it with some creeping plant that loved the shade. I mentioned my wish to A., and to my disgust he vetoed the tree-stump at once and for all time.

"Why," said he, "you surely don't want more snakes than we have already!"

"Snakes?" I replied, humbly.

"Yes," said he again, "snakes. And this rockery, fernery,—what do you call it? Why, this will be a regular snake nursery! The garter and the copperhead will think you put it up on purpose for them."

Tree-stump and rockery were instantly renounced. A few days later I showed him my plan, modified. He said—

"Yes, that is very pretty. But how is all that to be ploughed?"

"Ploughed? My dear A., this is to be shrubbery, and grass, and walks. You don't plough up that. What are you thinking of?"

"I'm thinking of what a jolly time the weeds will have. This place all round was a wilderness of weeds half grown when the carpenters and ditchers began their work. That killed them for one season; but there are weed-seeds enough in the ground to last for years. Every stirring of the soil will bring up enough for a fresh crop. I should be afraid to say how many years of clean thorough culture would be necessary before such a thing as lawn-grass would have a chance of existence after July. See for yourself how the weeds have grown wherever they had a chance,—over there, for instance, where formerly there was a straw stack to which stock had access during winter. Just in that few feet of space there is good soil. Look at the weeds."

It was true. There were rag-weed and pig-weed eight feet high, daturas showing their thorny seed-capsules, cockle-burrs, Spanish needles, beggars'-lice—an ugly, frousy company.

"But," said I, "of course I intend to have the place weeded. Surely there are women in the neighbourhood—old women—who would be glad to come and weed. In England we generally have old women to weed walks, for instance."

"I doubt your getting them to come, even if they exist in the neighbourhood. It would be a kind of work to which they have not been accustomed; and even suppose you induced them to come once, you would not get them to come a second time. All they know is how to plant and hoe corn, sweet potatoes, and tobacco. Take them out of that groove and they are lost and useless."

"Could I get any girls? They might be glad to earn something."

"Girls? Miserable trash! I would advise you not to try them."

"Well, then, surely I could have a man now and then. We can't have a howling wilderness around us. We must have a garden somehow."

"As to a man, I doubt very much whether we shall get what men we want ourselves. You

could never depend on your man, even though he declared on his oath that he would come on such a day. He would be sure that if he did not feel inclined to work the particular day you wanted him, you could not punish him for his failure by employing some other man to do his work, simply because you would not find the other man. By laying out the garden on this pretty plan, you are, I fear, laying up a great store of vexation and disappointment for yourself. Don't you know what thousands upon thousands of dollars are lost every year, further south, just because the niggers have a mind to go fishing, or else have a fair or a revival, when the cotton is ripening quickly and they ought to be busy picking from morning till night? It is the same here, only, thank Heaven, on a much smaller scale. We must wait and see. By-and-by we may perhaps get some hold, some influence, over these blacks. Meanwhile, lay out your garden so as to require the minimum of labour—that is, lay it out in straight lines, bisected by other straight lines; and where these lines bisect plant a tree. You can plant a hun-

dred trees in that way, say at distances of ten feet; that will do for dwarfs, or half dwarfs, and the spaces can be run through with the plough two or three times during the season with no trouble at all."

Here was a falling off from my *beau-idéal* of a garden! And yet I felt sure that A. was speaking the exact truth. I laid aside my pretty plan, with its shrubbery and its winding walks edged with grass, rather than face such a miserable failure as that shrubbery would be in July, with chick-weed and pig-weed nodding over the tops of the young trees, and purslane and couch-grass covering the walks. My second plan was quickly made, being merely a series of lines drawn on the paper, with other lines bisecting them at right angles. About an eighth of an acre was laid down in grass, to satisfy M.'s prejudice in favour of something green in front of the windows. Beyond the trees there was a space of half an acre for kitchen-garden. Beyond that again an orchard was planned for standard apples and pear-trees, to be set thirty-two feet apart each way; and lastly, a vine-

yard was laid out,—for, we said, we must and would make our own wines as people did in France.

So we ordered forty dollars' worth of vines and standard trees of one nurseryman, and thirty dollars' worth of dwarfs from another. We hired an old negro who knew how to use the spade—some can only hoe—and set him to work digging stations for the trees. There were between fifty and sixty holes to dig for the dwarf trees, and two trenches, twenty feet long each, to be dug deep and enriched for raspberry plants.

I am amused now, whenever I think of that old nigger. He presented himself at first in the guise of an ardent seeker after truth, and won my confidence completely. "Ah, mistiss," he used to say, "it's a mighty privilege you's got, bein' able to read the Scripters. I'se never had no chance o' book-larning. Ah, you's a mighty privilege." Then he would ask questions, clever old creature that he was! In his way he was as good a courtier as any of the time of Le Grand Monarque. One day A. said when I came in to dinner—

"What have you and Uncle Pomp been yarning about all the morning?"

I told him we had been talking about the golden rule.

A. laughed. "'Cute old chap. He's got his sermon for next Sunday out of you. Didn't you know he was a preacher?"

I did not know it. But why should he not repeat what I had said to him if it happened to be true? "He may be ignorant," said I; "but I think he wants to learn. He longs to read the Scriptures for himself, poor fellow, only he feels too old to learn."

A. laughed, very heartlessly I thought. "You think you have got hold of an Uncle Tom, I do believe!"

"Not quite. But I am sure that there are good points in the old man."

"At all events," said M., "Uncle Pomp's manners are good. He understands how to behave to ladies. I wish the younger ones did."

A. agreed that Uncle Pomp's manners were very good. For the rest, we might live and learn.

When one trench had been dug for raspberry-bushes, I ordered Uncle Pomp to begin the next while I went to consult A. about compost. I was away a good while. When I came back, I found that Uncle Pomp had filled up trench No. 1 by casting into it the stiff red clay dug out from No. 2. I exclaimed, how could he make such a mistake? Had I not told him plainly how that trench was to be filled up?

He was quite respectful in his reply. "Didn't onderstand rightly, I 'specs. Thought mistiss want dat hole filled up, anyway. Mighty big hole, anyhow. Wal, must dig um over again, I s'pose."

I mentioned this tiresome mistake to A. He replied—"Here, more than anywhere perhaps, it is necessary, if you want a thing properly done, to look after it yourself. I should never expect a negro to do anything right longer than I was looking at him."

The next day was Saturday. Uncle Pomp informed me, in his very best manner, that he did not wish to work on Saturday afternoon, as he liked to stay at home and "fix up" for Sun-

day. I made no objection. I thought it a good plan to give labouring men Saturday afternoon for themselves. How could they be expected to spend Sunday profitably if they were so hard-worked that sleeping away Sunday morning was all they felt fit for?

"You will be here on Monday, and finish those tree-holes, Uncle Pomp," said I.

"Yes, mistiss, if I live," was his reply.

I had not, as it happened, heard that phrase before. It impressed me, this plain acknowledgment of the uncertainty of life. I mentioned it to M. at supper-time. We were speculating whether it was original, or merely an imitation of the white people, when A. said, laughing—

"Did the old rascal say that? Then, depend upon it, he won't come. He is tired of the job, and you will have to dig the rest of your tree-holes yourself."

"But I can't! The holes are six feet across every way, and two feet deep. Imagine my trying to dig them, and in that stiff clay!"

"And with your ladies' spade!" Somehow

A. never could look at that ladies' spade without grinning. "So that's the kind of spade ladies use in England, eh? Hope they don't tire themselves too much."

But it was too serious for laughter, to me at least, this chance of Uncle Pomp's throwing up his work in such a mean way. E., however, gave me some comfort. He had been paying the old man for the work already done, and had, at his earnest request, advanced him ten dollars. He should be working here about one thing and another for a good bit, Uncle Pomp said, and if Mas'r E. could make him an advance in order to buy winter clothing, of which his family stood greatly in need, he should take it as a great kindness.

"And you let him have the ten dollars! I did not think you were so green," was A.'s remark.

On Monday Uncle Pomp failed to put in an appearance. Tuesday and Wednesday passed, and still he did not come. At last I sent a message to hurry him. The messenger did not return, as I expected; in fact, it was not for some days that I got his answer. It was—

"Wal, he say he don't feel like digging no mo' o' dem holes. He say it jes' like digging graves. Dem holes is too deep."

E., who made further inquiries, in consequence of the advance of wages he had made, found that Uncle Pomp had on that very Saturday afternoon begun a drinking-bout, which had lasted as long as a dollar remained. He also found that he was one of the most notorious drinkers in the township; that he beat his elder children so that they ran away; and that his wife, a notorious thief, managed for herself and the younger children as best she could, by picking, and stealing, and doing a day's work now and then.

It was no use fuming and fretting. The trees were ordered, and were probably on their way. The holes already dug, if not filled in with the proper compost, would be filled in by the clay sliding gradually down from the heaps at the sides. So I began wheeling the compost, corn-stalks, corn-cobs, dead leaves, refuse of all sorts, old bones that lay bleaching in many places on the flat,—all these coarse materials I placed

at the bottom of the holes; while the surface was composed of road-scrapings, yard-scrapings, and wood-ashes, of which I was fortunately able to get a cartload or two from a neighbour's yard. Of course A. and E., busy as they were, could not help much, and I could get no negro to come and do the work. Uncle Pomp had prejudiced them against it, by telling them it was like digging graves.

Yes, it was hard work; but not as hard as dancing all night, or entertaining people whom I did not care about. I do not remember ever having been too tired to sleep; and although it was a great satisfaction to feel that the last hole was dug and filled with proper compost, still I did not feel that I would rather die than dig any more holes. Far from it. That I did not feel more fatigue was owing in part, no doubt, to the "merry heart" that Shakespeare sings of, and in part to the wonderful elasticity of the climate.

All this while autumn had been stealing softly on us. Almost before we knew, the trees had put on their scarlet and golden covering, and

the woods were more gorgeous, more varied in tint, than any blossoming could make them. There was a slight sharpness in the air, mornings and evenings, but the days were as warm almost as in summer. It seemed quite impossible that winter should put an end to such lovely colouring and such delicious weather. Where should the cold come from? That there was a winter of some sort, we supposed; but, judging from the way in which Virginian domestic arrangements were made, it did not seem possible that it could be either long or severe. From all we had been able to learn of the cold before coming out, it had appeared to be quite trifling. Indeed it was only by chance that I brought my muff with me. I remembered having been glad of a muff a few times at Nice, even; and there might be a few such days in Virginia. So, there being a corner to spare, in it went. I remembered hearing from an English acquaintance, before we had any idea of coming to Virginia, that he had not worn a greatcoat out here for the whole winter. And this was a winter when we were

shivering in London, and the Thames was frozen over!

I asked a Virginian woman one day, when the wind was rather chilly for the cambric dress which I wore—"What kind of stuff do you wear for winter dresses?"

I asked this because I had lived for so many years where an English autumn or spring fabric made a dress quite warm enough for winter.

She said, "We wear winter calicoes. In the city they have fashionable things from New York, that change their name every year. But that is what we wear mostly in the country. Some few wear alpaca; but that is more expensive,—though it's well enough if you can get servants to do your work."

"What is winter calico?" I asked.

She took a bit of dark cotton print out of her work-bag and showed me. "That is winter calico."

"But," said I, "it is the same as what you wear in summer!"

"Oh no; we don't wear such dark colours in summer."

I felt much inclined to ask how they managed to keep warm in such flimsy garments; for the "winter calico" was worse in quality than the worst English cotton print I had ever seen. However, it was not my business; so I held my tongue.

After a little further talk, I inquired—

"Do you ever have snow here?"

How the woman stared! "Yes; for weeks at a time," she said. "Why, what made you think we didn't have snow?"

"For one thing, there seems so little shelter for stock. I pass farmyards with stables which are no better than sheds, with pig-pens quite shelterless. I see half-a-score of cows, and no cow-house. That is what made me ask whether there was snow here."

"Well, it is hard upon stock at times, and that's a fact. But the men say it don't pay to put up cattle-barns and suchlike. They say it is just as healthy, and more so, for stock to stay out all the time. Up north, I believe, they put everything under cover. But it makes more work; and we've got to get along just as best

we can, since the war. You see, if we were to put up barns, and cow-houses, and all that, there would be the lumber to get. It must be cut and sawed, even if it is growing on your own place. And there would be paying money out immediately. Well, if we have not got it, we can't pay it out, can we? So it's cheaper to let the cows and all just go along; and if a cow and calf die in a hard winter,—well! It's just luck,—and one must take the bad luck with the good."

I ventured to ask whether she felt the cold much when it was cold.

"Oh," she said, "we do feel it, I can tell you, in spite of our quilts. But it does not last long, anyhow,—that's one comfort."

I learnt afterwards that a "quilt" means a quilted petticoat. In the country scarcely any flannel is worn. The people have a small cotton patch, and either attend to it themselves or get a negro woman to attend to it, paying her half the produce for her labour. This cotton makes warm garments, counterpanes, &c., when quilted, and helps to supply the place of flannel.

One morning we awoke very early, with a cold

air blowing through the chinks on our faces. On going to the window, M. found her beloved lemon seedlings, which she had been nursing all the summer in a pot, quite blackened and dead with frost. This was indeed a sad foretaste of winter. M. had been assured by a Virginian, who "went in" for knowing all about climates, that the lemon would flourish perfectly here, and would only require protection during the severe part of the winter,—perhaps a few days, or at most a week or two,—unless it was an extraordinary winter.

Perhaps this was going to be an extraordinary winter. E., who had ordered stoves and stove-pipes for the house, wrote to hurry the iron-monger. We began anxiously to look out for our trees, too, which had been ordered quite early; indeed the orchard and vineyard furnishings had been ordered of an agent, who came round with a neat order-book, and a beautiful illustrated catalogue, before autumn had well set in; and they ought to have arrived weeks ago.

One day E. read an account in the New York

newspaper of an epidemic—a kind of influenza —which was attacking the horses everywhere in the North, and which was said to be travelling rapidly southwards. A few days later we heard that the influenza had reached Baltimore. E. began to inquire in the neighbourhood what would be the Virginian treatment, supposing the epidemic found its way up here. Nearly everybody had his own specific. Some of these were cruel, some were nasty, and some merely silly. One man had faith in punching a hole in the ears,—he had done so once, and "it had helped his horse mightily;" another in pouring oil into the ears; a third would use a nostrum composed of pounded charcoal, wood-ashes, and something else—I think it was butter-milk—to drench the sick beast with; a fourth pinned his faith on tar,—to be stuffed up the nostrils, or burnt in the stable, or both; one or two, wiser than the rest, advocated letting alone. As a rule, I think tar was the most popular remedy,—probably because we had a barrel of it, and no one else had. People used to come to beg for it, with tin quart-cans in their hands.

Of course they were never refused; and I never heard that a horse had died from its application.

E. pondered over his horse-book, but without much result. However, it was settled that M. and I should go to town by the next boat, and lay in a good store of linseed-meal, sulphuric ether, laudanum, and bran. M. had great confidence in a bran-mash. We also had *carte-blanche* to get from the principal druggist any remedy which had been, to his knowledge, found to answer.

The boat was erratic in its movements; sometimes it passed in the middle of the night, sometimes towards morning. So, to make sure of not missing it, we dressed at a little past midnight, and went down to the river-side to wait. There was a severe frost, and we had to wait for an hour before the boat came into the lock. Glad indeed were we to enter the shelter of the ladies' cabin; and yet more glad to get out of it again when the boat stopped. Its mephitic air made us actually ill. There were twenty people in it when we entered; there was a coal-stove nearly red-hot, an abominable coal-

oil lamp, and absolutely no ventilation whatever.

Besides the horse medicines, we intended to get stores of everything we could want for the house, to last for six months. We never ate the country-store sugar without suspicion that something was wrong about it, when it happened once or twice that we were "out" of sugar. So we ordered a big barrel of sugar, a big bag of coffee, many pounds of pepper, salt fish and white flour on a noble scale, mustard ditto, and salad-oil by the dozen flasks. But what do you suppose headed the list, lest by any mischances we should forget it? Bath-brick in quantity for knife-cleaning. Jenny, who had never seen such a thing before, "had no use for it;" she had "no use for cleaning knives, anyhow." So I used to clean them myself, on a nice little board E. made for me. We found all the tradespeople very civil (I am told they are much more civil to ladies than to gentlemen); and the stores we wanted were moderate in price, with the exception of the olive-oil and the bath-brick, which are considered rather as luxuries, and but

little used. We had had an intention of getting six dozen flasks of oil, but did not, and were glad of it afterwards, for the oil turned out to be of second quality,—just what the servants used for the lamps in Florence. There was one thing we found it almost impossible to get,—that was bran. However, we did get a bag of it at last. M. declared she was not going back without the wherewithal to make bran-mashes, so we persevered till we found it.

The boat was advertised to start at six in the evening. We were at the landing punctually, but found that the epidemic had seized on the horses, and that no others could be procured at that hour. Our heavy stores were already consigned to a freight-boat, and there was nothing to do except go back to the hotel, where the hotel-clerk welcomed us with an effusive hand-shake! Next morning was very grey and frosty, with a north-west wind. We spent some time in endeavouring to get a conveyance to take us home, as by this time every horse in the stables of the boat company was attacked by the influenza. The livery-stable keeper shook his

head. His horses had all "given out" the day before; he had not a team left capable of drawing the railway omnibus. Towards the middle of the day we heard of a freight-boat which was certain to start. An acquaintance whom we met in the street told us he was on his way to the post-office to get the mail-bag for his village, which ought to have gone by the boat the night before. We were glad to take refuge in the tiny cabin of the freight-boat from the cold wind; and when we saw two Virginians come in, each with a mail-bag for some village many miles up the river, we felt sure that the boat must be going to start. They went on shore again and we waited for an hour; and then they came back, saying the mules all had the influenza, shouldered each his mail-bag, and carried it back to the post-office. They were going to walk home.

At first I thought of sending a note to E. by a negro, who might perhaps carry it for a dollar. On second thoughts, I decided on walking home myself, as with that cold wind blowing, a negro would probably enter the first whisky-shanty

he came to, and stay there. M., who had sprained her ankle the day before, went back to the hotel; we sent a message to E. by our acquaintance who was going up the river, to bring a horse down to meet me, and off I set, at one in the afternoon.

I could not walk very fast, for the wind was in my face. Then, too, in places the road was very bad. At one spot where there was an outfall for the overplus of canal-water into the river, the water was over the stepping-stones, and I was obliged to wade it barefoot. As I got further away from the flat country the rocks began to form into high cliffs on one side of the path, and then I was hindered for another reason. There were beautiful new plants and ferns, and I could not resist the temptation of stopping to gather them. It was cold, of course, for the rills were all frozen, and side by side with the ferns, icicles a yard long were hanging; but I hardly felt the cold as yet. At one place I lost the path and wandered into a marsh, and had to retrace my steps for half a mile. In this way I wasted so much time, that, when the sun

went down, I was many miles from home. I walked on and on till it was quite dark. I could just see the outline of the trees against the sky, and the black mass of rocks at my left. The wind seemed to get colder, and now when I tried to make haste I could not. I went on, mechanically putting one foot before the other, crashing through the ice wherever a spring ran across the path, stumbling over big stones that I could not see. Even the grunt of a nigger's pig would have been a welcome sound just then; but the only sound, besides my own footsteps, was the plash of water at the foot of the embankment. Then terror took possession of me. What if, I thought, some nigger should spring out from behind those tree-trunks and rob me of my watch and purse, and throw me into the canal! I stared hard at every dead tree-stump by the path, expecting it to move.

I had been in this idiotic frame of mind for about half an hour, when a horseman passed me and then stopped. I should have run behind a rock, but was too tired. I kept on moving one foot before the other, when the horseman turned

round and spoke. "Is that you?" It was E. He had had my message only half an hour previously. The Virginians had not, indeed, stopped on the road to botanise, but they had stopped at every house to warm themselves and have a dram, so that A. and E. were sitting down to supper when my message arrived, transmitted by the lock-keeper, who had good-naturedly risen from his own supper to carry it. Presently A. came by, riding fast. In course of transmission my message had got altered, and A. and E. had been led to suppose that both M. and myself were on our way, so A. had rushed to a neighbour who lived a mile off to borrow a side-saddle for M. For five minutes I was glad to be on horseback; but then I repented, for with that icy wind playing around me, I felt myself freezing rapidly. We had but four miles to go, and A. rode on to tell Jenny to make a blazing fire, get the kettle boiling, and "fix up" generally. When we reached our log-dwelling, I was so exhausted with the cold that I could scarcely move, much less stand. E. just lifted me off my horse and set me on a chair. The fire was

nearly out; the water was cold; the supper was cold; and there was Jenny singing nigger hymns in a stentorian voice, seated by a blazing fire in her cabin! She had not paid the slightest attention to A.'s request; and he was not there to enforce it, as he had gone on to return the borrowed saddle. E. had arranged a room for me in the new house. He had lit a fire in the up-stairs room of the log-house, but the violence of the wind was such that he was obliged to put it out again lest the shingle-roof should catch fire. One tiny fragment of hot charcoal blown up the chimney and out on the roof would suffice to set all in a blaze after the weeks of dry hot weather we had had. He took up an enormous brazier full of burning charcoal to my room, smothered me in blankets, tucked his macintosh over all, and left me, offering to look in after a while to see that I was not suffocated with charcoal-fumes! I did not know it was possible to be so cold and live. I felt utterly demoralised, and was really too helpless to undress properly. However, I did think, before I went to sleep—which was as soon as I got warm—

what a comfort it was to know that I should never be as cold again as long as I lived! And how much colder it must have been for many people, women well born and delicately bred, during the war, when Sherman and Hunter had passed by, pillaging and burning as they went! Did I not know of one of these war victims, a wretched invalid, now living in a hovel open to wind and rain?—a hovel which would rouse the pity or the indignation of any district-visitor at home!

Next morning was Sunday. I awoke quite fresh and lively, with neither cough, cold, nor rheumatism, and opened my eyes on the brightest sun and the bluest sky. But during the night the wind had veered due west, and was colder than ever. Neither hat nor bonnet was sufficient head-gear for such a low temperature; so I searched for something better, found a gay woollen anti-macassar in the bottom of a trunk, and put it on. It answered admirably—in fact it was so comfortable that I could not part with it; and when, later in the day, two gentlemen called, I received them in this remarkable head-

gear without flinching. As Jenny did not "feel like" cooking any dinner for us on such a cold day, I was obliged to do it myself. She put some potatoes in a bucket of water and left them there; she always did dislike washing potatoes. Naturally they froze solid, so then I had to set them on the top of the stove to thaw!

E. talked of taking the ox-cart down to bring up M., though he felt it to be a risk to take even the oxen to town—for I had seen ox-teams in the street the day before, so prostrate with influenza as to be scarcely able to draw an empty cart. However, M. appeared in the afternoon with the bran, yeast for my bakings, horse medicines, and all the other precious commodities. That same evening the horses were taken ill—and very ill they were for a long time—in spite of M.'s bran-mashes. That same evening, too, the river froze, and continued frozen for six weeks, so that carts and waggons could pass over in perfect safety. After a heavy fall of snow the cold moderated, and A. and E. began to make a sledge. They tried to entice me to go sleighing; but I had "no use for" such

arctic amusements, though I did not mind going for a walk in the snow with E. when he went with the ox-team to haul logs from the wood on the top of the hill. I used to wear long boots, boys' size, which some instinct had impelled me to purchase, and keeping well in the track of the oxen, I got on very comfortably. On bright, still days, I must confess, much as I hate snow and cold, the landscape was remarkably beautiful, especially towards sunset, when there were pink clouds in the sky, and low down in the horizon streaks of pale bluish-green, like *vert de mer*, harmonising with the grey-green of the firs and the greenish-grey of the rocks on the Amherst side.

It was about the time this cold set in that we got rid of Jenny and her husband. Their term of service was up, and they went, to our great satisfaction. A. and E. made every inquiry in the neighbourhood for servants, but without success. The white people whom they consulted told them that they would get nobody, because niggers did not like moving in the winter. We found, some time afterwards, that

this was not true, for they are all in the habit of making engagements at the New Year. But people were afraid that we should pay better than they did; and not only raise the rate of wages, but teach the negroes the bad habit of expecting to be paid their wages in money. However, we had suffered so much discomfort during Jenny's term of service, that we begged to be allowed to try, at least, to do without negro servants. A. and E. were shocked at the idea of our undertaking the cooking and cleaning, just as if we were settlers in a new country. But we had gone through so much with this cook, who would neither cook nor clean, that we insisted on having our way, and trying Franklin's advice,—"If you want a thing well done, do it yourself."

The only real inconvenience we suffered was owing to the strike of our black washerwoman. She declared it was too cold to wash, and it was impossible to contradict her! We got on very well for about six weeks, and then we found we must have a washing-day. How I had pitied a friend of M.'s, a missionary's wife in New

Zealand, who had sometimes been obliged to do her own washing like any poor woman, because she could not get a native to do it for her! I had said "poor thing!" from the bottom of my heart. And here, now, were two more poor things — *i. e.*, M. and myself, who would be obliged to stand at the wash-tub because the natives would not come and wash! However, as we managed it, our washing-day was not so very bad after all. M. and I did the little things; and all the big, heavy things A. and E. did for us, in the washing-machine we had brought from England, which we had not been able to induce any negro to use.

I have a great opinion of this method. I have observed in both A. and E. a superior grade of moral elevation, a deeper insight into the inmost heart of things, since the experience they had in washing their own sheets and garments, on that occasion when we did the washing by proxy. To all my friends who contemplate becoming missionaries' wives I would say, "If ever you find yourself forsaken by your faithful blacks, make your missionary do the

washing: it will do him good, and cannot do you harm."

One night we were disturbed by reports like heavy guns up and down the river. In the morning E. came in with the welcome news that the ice was breaking up. In a day or two it was all in motion, moving grandly over the falls. Now we began to hope to see something of the stoves and stove-pipes ordered months ago. All this time we had been cooking on the hearth in the log-house; for the only stove —the kitchen-stove—E. had placed in M.'s bedroom. It kept us from freezing, and that was all. As soon as the ice was gone, the boats began to run, and the stoves and various articles of furniture arrived. The trees also arrived, having been for weeks on board a freight-boat which got frozen up somewhere near Richmond. Naturally they were frozen through, and the packing was nothing special, though we had paid extra for it. The copy of the beautiful illustrated fruit catalogue left by the tree agent gave directions as to the treatment of trees which were frozen before reaching the purchaser. They

were to be put in the cellar to thaw gradually, and to be left there till spring. As it was pretty certain that every fibre of them was frozen, and as the ground was frozen to a depth of nearly two feet, we made a virtue of necessity, and put them in the cellar till spring.

And this was the mild winter of Virginia!

LETTER V.

AFTER such a bitter winter, does it not seem extraordinary that by the middle of March the sun was so powerful that M. and I were gardening early in the morning so as to avoid the heat of the day? We certainly did earn our breakfast about that time. It was a pity that so much of our energy was wasted. A few trees, ordered of an Englishman settled in Washington, did fairly well, though they had remained in the package as they came to us, in the cellar, all the winter. But the bulk of our investments in the tree line were from a Virginian nursery. They had been put in the cellar on their arrival, according to the directions in the fascinating illustrated catalogue left by the fruit-tree pedlar who beguiled us—"to be planted as soon as the frost was out of the ground." To cut a long

tale short, those trees and vines were a miserable failure. The vines—of which the grapes were, as we fondly hoped, to make a good wholesome wine, like the home-made wine of the French landed proprietors — were covered with mildew on the roots. The trees had no roots at all; they had been left in the nursery. Here were forty dollars as completely thrown away as if E. had tossed them into the river. Several of our friends have at various times been taken in in a similar manner by the beautiful illustrated tree catalogues of these fruit-tree pedlars, and have had equal reason to regret their dollars. Of course, when a man confesses to having ordered fruit-trees "merely to get rid of the fellow," one need not waste much time in pitying him when he complains that the varieties he ordered were not sent, or that the roots were left in the nursery. For ourselves, we resolved to try no more such expensive experiments. I bought a pruning and grafting knife, French grafting wax, and an excellent French book on arboriculture, by Gressent—a book so good that it is a wonder it is not translated.

Written for the climate of Northern and Central France particularly, it answers most happily for the climate of this part of Virginia. The directions and illustrations in the chapters on budding and grafting are so good, that even a stupid person cannot help learning how to do these things. Certainly they can be learned with far less trouble than, let us say, a new way of dressing one's hair, or a new crochet or knitting stitch. I am sure we shall agree which is the more useful. It was rather hot, certainly, stooping to bud dwarf stocks in the month of August, but that was the only drawback. And what a pleasure to see the bud swelling gradually, and the new bark forming, and the young head growing next spring!

After the summer was over, I felt almost worn out. Our "help" was very uncertain. Those who lived close by and would have come as permanent servants were such bad characters that we could not have risked having them in the house. There was nothing for it but to wait and hope that somebody fairly respectable would turn up before we got quite worn out. I

daresay I did more than I was obliged to do; but it seems to me, as I look back, that I could not have helped doing it at the time. M. was ill, too, during part of the summer, and we felt rather anxious about her once or twice. However, when most overworked, I could always think of the stories I had read and heard of settlers in Wisconsin, Nebraska, and other western States, and feel thankful that my lot had not been cast in those uninviting regions. With me, too, was the constant thought—"it is just for this once. It will not happen so again." It was enough to make one's heart ache to read of the wretched slavery of these western settlers' wives; and it so happened that just about that time a great many letters on the subject were appearing in the "Home Interests" department of the Northern agricultural paper to which we subscribed. These communications were not made for the mere sake of grumbling, but with a view to find out whether "help" could not be had from the overflowing eastern cities, so that the hard lot of the writers might be eased a little.

I used to think that American women had everything their own way; that America was a sort of woman's paradise. But these despairing letters modified my ideas considerably. For instance, one woman wrote that her husband owned eight hundred acres of land in Iowa; had reaper, mower, horse-rake, and various other more or less costly labour-saving farm implements. All harvest-time nine men were employed. The wife—mother of five children, one a baby in arms—was expected to have breakfast on the table daily before sunrise for all this company. (Remember that Americans always have hot bread for breakfast.) She helped in the evening-milking of nine cows during the busiest part of the season, with baby on her lap, if awake at that hour, and the other children crying for sleepiness. She also had the butter to make whenever the dog was refractory and refused to churn; to carry the sour-milk to the pigs; to make and mend, wash, starch, and iron; wash, dress, and feed the little children; pick, can, or otherwise preserve fruit for winter use; cook not only the three regular meals (with

hot bread), but also get ready the "noon piece" —a kind of luncheon, I suppose, eaten in the field. All this she seemed to take as a matter of course. Other women had nearly the same work to do, only they had not, perhaps, so many young children; or their husbands, happily, did not farm so many acres. One thing seemed to strike her as *rather* hard,—and that was the "lugging" the buttermilk up from the cellar all the way to the pig-pen. But I think the "last straw" in her case was this: she had asked one of the "hands" who was resting in the porch—she being in the agonies of dishing up dinner with a crying baby on one arm — to fetch her a bucket of water from the spring, and had thereupon been reproved by her husband! Doubtless the husband was a sort of western Legree. Legree, you remember, thought that it was much cheaper to buy fresh negroes now and then, than not to overwork his plantation hands. This Iowa man must have reasoned in the same way. One letter, detailing much the same state of things, with the exception of the family of babies to be cared for, finishes by the writer

complaining that all the summer long she is so tired with the long day's work, beginning at four in the morning, that she constantly falls asleep while trying to say her prayers! This woman went to bed at eleven o'clock.

The overwork and the want of sleep seem terrible, but the account given by a Wisconsin lady of her girlish experiences is more terrible in some respects. The Iowa settler had food in abundance, and a good, warm, light house. The Wisconsin settlers had neither. This girl went out with her family from Massachusetts. They were all well educated, loving books and various studies. But the father of the family was bitten with the desire of owning land, and land was cheap in Wisconsin, and the then infant State was represented by real estate agents and railroad men to be the State which was going to "whip" all the other States. So out they went, the heaviest part of their luggage being an enormous box of books. What strides were they not going to make in their Latin, their Greek, and their mathematics, in these wilds, where there would be absolutely no society!

The father was peremptory as to the leaving behind of all household gear. Why pay carriage for cupboards, and pots and pans, and such foolish things as scrubbing-brushes, when they could buy all they wanted as soon as they were settled? They bought a tract of land through an agent, said tract being conveniently situated near a city. On arriving at their destination they found that the city was not quite built as yet. There was one street containing a hundred dwellings or so, and of these, one was a frame-house with eight rooms and green window-shutters, the envy of all who dwelt in the ninety-and-nine log-houses with two rooms. In this frame-house they found shelter,—paying for a party of eight (one an infant), and for two rooms only, as much as they would have paid for comfortable accommodation at a summer watering-place. For green-handled knives the price was the same as for ivory-handled in one of the older States. For a common kitchen-cupboard, with perforated tin sides, they paid what would have bought a well-made sideboard at their old home. For frightfully ugly coarse

cotton prints they paid as if they were the prettiest French piqués or percales. But the inflated price of everything was not the worst. The carpenter who contracted to build their house knew nothing of his trade beyond what he might have learnt by sitting on a log and looking at somebody putting up a house. The flooring was of unplaned boards roughly joined. The shingling was put on anyhow, and there were no divisions made for rooms; there was, so to speak, nothing but a barn below and a loft above. (The idea was given in this letter that paterfamilias was an exceedingly cultivated person. My private opinion is that he was a mooning idiot.) There was no time to remedy these defects. A wedding was coming off in the family in which they were boarding, and the people wanted their rooms; so on Christmas-eve they had to enter their barn-like house and do the best they could. These poor, delicate, cultivated Massachusetts ladies! They hung up carpets to make divisions for dormitories. It was too cold to undress, so they went to bed with their clothes on, and cried themselves to

sleep, the snowflakes falling through the badly-shingled roof and mingling with their tears. That seems bad enough, but it must have been worse to have felt as hungry as they did in the keen Wisconsin air, and not to have had proper food to eat. Bread and pork was their staff until they got their own cows and planted their own garden. The wives of earlier settlers told with pride of their substitute for apples in pies, while their young orchards were growing—namely, pumpkin flavoured with tartaric acid. During the first twelve months these ladies must have had work enough, and worry and annoyance enough, besides privation, to make them feel old and look haggard for the rest of their days. I doubt whether the knowledge that paterfamilias possessed some hundreds of acres of real estate could be any compensation to them for the premature loss of the freshness and buoyancy of youth. The whole of that winter, the only water they had was snow brought in and melted in kettles on the stove: even the horses were watered in this way. "It was the constant endeavour to keep things clean," the

writer observes, "which tried us more than anything. By the end of the first year we had scrubbed those rough boards almost smooth, but our hands and our tempers were alike worn out."

That is a gloomy picture, is it not? But worse than that is the account of a settler's wife in Nebraska, which must be surely the most horrible new country a man ever attempted to settle in. In some parts the settlers first build what they call "dug-outs." A dug-out is a hole excavated in the side of a hill or rising bit of ground, roofed with logs and sods, with a front wall of the same. A space is left for the doorway, and the waggon-sheet serves for a door. The floor is the bare ground, hardened by constant trampling. The dug-out has this advantage: it can be kept warm in winter unless the wind happens to blow on the door-side. But this settler's wife had not even the comfort of a dug-out. Her husband had "located" on the "boundless prairie;" not a hill was in sight, hardly a tree; just a clump of cotton-wood where a spring oozed out of the

ground; beyond that the horizon. Do you want to know what the "boundless prairie" means for a poor settler's wife? It means that she will be obliged to fasten the ends of her clothes-line to big stones, lest the wind should carry it and the clothes away several hundred miles east or west. It means that sometimes she will not venture to hang out her clothes at all, but must lay each piece on the bare ground, with a big stone in the middle to keep it safe. It means that there will not be a neighbour within twenty or thirty miles; and that in the direst necessity there will be, perhaps, no doctor nearer than fifty or a hundred miles. It means that for many months of the year she must, if she wants her bread to rise, put it in the middle of her own feather-bed to keep it warm. This is what this settler's wife was obliged to do. I do not know of a more miserable picture than that of this poor young woman with her tiny baby in a log-house ten feet by twelve, the walls swarming with bugs. (Bugs always swarm in cotton-wood; and, unfortunately for the poorer settlers, cotton-wood is the only wood

that is found growing naturally in some parts of these prairies.) There the poor creature sits, trying hopelessly to warm herself at her fire of cotton-wood logs which give out little heat, trying to keep her baby warm, wishing for the bread to rise; waiting, poor soul, for her husband, who has ridden twenty miles to the nearest store for a gallon of molasses, because they have no pork left, and scarcely any money. This woman "gave out," and no wonder.

Some of the things which helped to knock me up are rather amusing to look back upon, though when I read and hear these tales of western settlers, I feel as if I had been making a great fuss about nothing. I suppose, however, that I did work hard, according to my capacity; and I am sure that, had I tried to do a tenth part of what those women did, I should be sleeping now under the sod, instead of writing to you in a reasonably jolly frame of mind. . . .

[I have hit upon a brilliant idea. I found myself going to sleep with the pen in my hand. I was determined to keep awake, and finish this letter if possible for next mail-day, but my eyes

would shut themselves. I tried keeping one eye open, but it was no good. This comes of getting up at half-past five. It is only three in the afternoon, and I feel as if it were nearly midnight. That is always the way. Well, I got some of E.'s tobacco, and crumbled it into snuff. And now I am wide-awake again, and able to go on. One lives and learns. I can forgive the mean white women their short pipe, and even their chewing. Perhaps the poor creatures took to tobacco in despair when they found themselves going to sleep over their knitting and sewing in the afternoon. They would call half-past five in the morning a very late hour for rising. An industrious white woman tells me she has milked the cows, and got her husband's breakfast-loaf, before the "sun comes over the mountain."]

. . . It is very pretty of you to say that my life is a poem. But when I went to the spring one hot afternoon, and carried a bucket of water up-hill to the reapers, I assure you I felt very prosy indeed. *Que voulez-vous?* E. began by laying down a law which was to be as that of the Medes and Persians, that whatever I did in

household work was to be done for ourselves only, and that I was never to do anything for the "hands," white or black. Very right and proper, of course. But when the wheat was being cut, behold thunder-clouds piling themselves up high in the south-west, and E. trembling for his wheat. So, naturally, as my carrying water to the field prevented the necessity of sending a binder for it, I could not in reason refuse. Nor did I object to cooking the black woman's food one day, for the same reason. Thunderstorms in June here are no joke; and we were threatened with them daily — and sometimes got them—all haying-time, and all through wheat-harvest. I have been frequently wet through in a run of less than twenty yards to the house. Fortunately E. so managed that neither the hay nor the wheat was damaged. I think the hardest day's work I had was the day he was stacking. Fancy my emotion at being told, about 10 A.M., that two English gentlemen had come to help him, and I must get dinner ready, as he could not possibly spare one of the women. E. was glad enough of this

unexpected help, and so was I; for both were thorough energetic workers, and one of them understood all about stacking,—a great boon to E., as none of the Virginians working for him were good stackers; and naturally he knew nothing about it himself. That day, in the coolest part of the house, the thermometer stood at 86°. I assure you it was very prosy poetry picking peas that morning. And then I had to bake bread in the afternoon, because my compatriots liked the bread so much that they ate it nearly all up! M. was better that day, and got up and actually made a rice-pudding, and laid the cloth, which was a great help. Now, you with imagination, will you please figure yourself sitting down in a darkened room, eating hot boiled ham and green peas and onions, and drinking hot tea, with the thermometer at 86° and over? We all performed that feat, and survived it; and I carried up some of this vulgar dinner to M., who had retired to bed after making her pudding, and she was none the worse any more than we were.

But the great day of all was the day we had

our thrashing-dinner. On making inquiries as to the wages given on such occasions in the neighbourhood, E. was informed, with some solemnity, that it was not the custom to hire for thrashing round here. "Folks just went around and helped each other." E. did not like this at all. He had intended paying all the "hands" board-wages, so as to obviate the necessity of having a crowd of mean whites in the house at meal-times for two days or more. Of course, being white, they would have felt mortally insulted had they been asked to sit down at the same table with the negroes. They would probably have felt offended by having their dinner set out anywhere except in our own dining-room. Finding that he must in this instance bow to the customs of the country, E. wished M. and me to go away for a few days, till the work was over, and the place quiet again. Above all, he feared that—being obliged to give whisky, in deference to inexorable custom—we should be annoyed by tipsy men walking into the sitting-room, &c. However, I stoutly refused to go away, as I felt sure the food would

be pillaged wholesale by the nigger women, to say nothing of table-cloths, silver spoons, &c. We persuaded M. to go away for a few days; and it was well she did, for the noise and fuss would have worried her to death. E. was rather anxious about it all, as it was his first thrashing-dinner, and in view of future wheat-harvests it was desirable to make a favourable impression on his "help;" and the whisky lay heavy on his mind. However, after long reflection on the subject in all its bearings,—on the offence to us, if he gave too much, and the offence to others if he gave too little,—he resolved to cut the knot and give none at all; but instead, to vary the viands somewhat, and give all and sundry, white and black, coffee strong enough "to knock them down." I was more than willing to do that; and I astonished Aunt Caroline more than she had been astonished in her life by the number of pounds of coffee I made her grind. I made nine fruit-pies; and that was all the cooking I did, being fully employed in weighing and giving out stores and rations, and keeping my eyes open everywhere, as I knew

two of my black lady-helps, at least, were afflicted with kleptomania.

As far as we knew, the dinner was a perfect success. The table groaned with boiled ham, boiled shoulder of pork, fish, fruit-pies, fried chicken, and all sorts of vegetables. The blacks had exactly the same at their table. (One woman said, grinning and giggling with delight, 'The folks will have so much to eat, they won't know what to do.") There was a never-failing supply of strong coffee and sugar, and nobody seemed to miss the whisky; so we are hoping E. will never be obliged to give the horrible stuff again. Americans either do not drink at all, or they drink immoderately. They would laugh at the idea of mixing spirit with water. They toss it down, neat, as if it were a dose of physic. The effect would not be so pernicious if the spirit were pure; but what the mean whites and niggers buy at these country stores is absolutely poisonous,—more so, E. says, than the worst adulterated beer or spirit in Europe.

Dec. 7th. — I think the last straw which

broke this camel's back was the cow. But if we had not had the cow when we did, I really think M. would have died. For a long time milk was the only nourishment she could take. She could not endure the sight of poultry, for a sentimental reason, because she knew that the chicken on the table must have been running about the yard shortly before. Of course she knew, too, that if it had not been running about in our yard, it would have been running about in some other yard. And common-sense would tell any one that there ought to be more satisfaction in eating a plump chicken that had led a perfectly happy, well-fed life, than in eating a skinny creature that had scratched hard for a bare living all the days of its chickenhood. But one cannot expect that kind of common-sense from invalids. My plump ducks were rejected for the same cause. She was tired of eggs, no matter how they were dressed, and tired of Liebig's Extract; and though we tried ordering meat from the town, we could never depend on its arriving fit to be eaten. Sometimes it would be put off at a lock some way down the river,

and we owed it to the people's good-nature that we got it at all. Sometimes it was carried many miles beyond, and we only received it on the boat's return trip. More than once have I been obliged to make up the kitchen-fire at ten o'clock at night, when the meat was put off at the right lock, and cook it all, lest it should not keep till morning. These things are trifling to people in good health; but where there is an invalid they become serious worries. Ever since we came here we had bought our milk and butter from one of our tenants. The butter was always short in weight, so that, though the nominal price was 25 cents = 1s. per lb., it really was more like 1s. 6d. It was seldom good, according to our ideas of butter; and all to be said of it was, that it was better than none. But we had gone on buying it in the hope that some time or other we might have a white woman out from England who could milk a cow properly and manage a dairy as we English think it ought to be managed. But now M. was in this poor state of health, she began to feel disgust at the milk supplied by the

tenants. Their cows, as we knew, got their living anyhow, wandering up and down the path by the river, happy if they could find a weak place in somebody's fence so as to get a good feed off a green crop of some sort or other. Sometimes the milk was bitter, from their feeding on the branches of tulip-trees, of which they are particularly fond. Sometimes it turned sour a few hours after milking-time, from their having been driven hard or frightened. Sometimes they wandered miles away in search of pasture, and no milk could we have till they came back. All this was trying to the invalid. We decided, therefore, on beginning dairy-work "on our own hook." I studied, as I already told you, the chapter on milking in Stephens's 'Book of the Farm;' and a neighbour good-naturedly gave me one lesson on a very old cow that was nearly dry. This difficulty, I felt, had to be conquered, like many other obstacles which rise up in our path of life, by simply determining to grapple with it in earnest. So a friend possessing many cows, and an English dairy-woman, was commissioned to pick out for us

a well-educated, lady-like cow, and send her up with as little delay as possible. It was in August that the cow came—an admirable, well-bred creature, I was told; but to me her chief attraction consisted in being harmless. I very soon learnt how to milk her properly; and from the first, did not find it half so fatiguing as practising octave scales for a quarter of an hour at a time, as I did when Leybach was my master. It was fun to see the astonishment of the black folk at the sight of Miss Ma'y milking the cow. Of course I set to work like an English dairy-maid, with skirts well tucked up, and a three-legged milking-stool, which E. made for me. Here, as I think I told you, the dairy-maid takes a small tin bucket in her hand, and walks after the cow, who promenades round the yard and stops when she "feels like it." As the native cows rarely give more than a quart at a milking, the loss of time is not so great as you might suppose. All the English people who keep any number of cows endeavour to get an English dairy-woman, because it is so impossible to make the niggers milk properly. I only

know of one instance where this was done; and it was because the master remained in the cow-stable all milking-time, watching the niggers like a detective.

How you would have laughed had you seen our first attempts at butter-making! E. had bought a patent churn, warranted to bring the butter within twenty minutes. With the churn came a neat little book which professed to tell you everything you ought to know in the matter of butter-making, and assured you that you would never—no, never—regret your outlay, but that your success would put any quantity of greenbacks (*i.e.*, paper money), in your pocket, and make all your neighbours so wildly envious that they would instantly rush to buy churns like yours. This churn, I must tell you, was intended to churn the whole milk, so as to save the trouble of skimming. Any contrivance to save myself, legitimately, from more work, was, of course, hailed by me as a boon. So I put all in—milk and cream—and began to churn at 6 A.M. one fine, bright morning, and went on steadily for three hours. Then E. came and

sent me away to breakfast, quite confident that I ought to have brought the butter two hours before, and that I was churning too slowly. He began most valiantly, went on for half an hour, but still the butter did not come. He lit his pipe (which, I am sure, was a very wrong thing to do when churning); then he read the 'Times' and the 'Saturday Review,' and sang "*Ah che la morte*" and "Old Hundred," and, finally, became unparliamentary in his language. The butter came at last, and unpleasant-looking stuff it was. However, I have found out the mysterious reason of its not coming, and consider myself ill-used now if I have to churn more than forty minutes.

With temperature all right,—and here *the* great secret lies,—and everything else favourable, I have made butter (from cream—not from the whole milk) in five minutes by the clock, and very good butter too. In itself, I find dairy-work rather amusing than otherwise; but of course it makes more work, as the necessity of scrupulous cleanliness is even greater here than it is in England. I make the negroes clean

the dairy utensils, as a rule; but I always have to give a second cleaning before I venture to use any of them. But the luxury of new milk, cream, and fresh well-made butter, is not to be despised, and makes the work of preparation sit lightly on one's shoulders. I have been amused to see young men "tuck in" to bread and cream as if they were mere schoolboys, with the remark that they had not seen such a thing since leaving England. One young fellow who has bought an estate fifteen miles up the river, asked me to tell him what I put in the butter to make it so yellow, because his cows' butter was perfectly white, and he wished it to look rich, as mine did. My secret was soon told. It was not arnatto, or any other like abomination; but either unlimited clover, or a peck of sliced pumpkin, parsnip, or carrot, or any root we happen to have, sprinkled with a quart of corn-meal, and now and then a little salt. I take this *bonne bouche* to Nanny myself, and she always expects it, and moos when she hears my step at the cow-house door. She is very tame, and follows me about like a dog. Once, indeed,

she followed me into the garden and did irreparable damage to some dwarf pear-trees before I could get her out. We find that this creature, well fed and kindly treated, gives as much milk as three cows treated *à la* Virginian,—which means, kept on short commons for nine months of the year, and exposed to the fiercest heat and intensest cold. I grieve to say that my having undertaken dairy-work does not meet with the approbation of the aristocracy of the neighbourhood. One lady—who, her income averaging about £5 per annum, is chiefly supported by gifts from the Freemasons — said she would rather go without milk all her life than see her daughter milk a cow! I smile when I hear such miserable nonsense as this. The daughter in question happens to have more sense than the mother, and wishes, poor delicate young thing, that she had a cow to milk. There are, of course, some praiseworthy exceptions. I know a pretty girl who gets up at four every morning, milks the cows, gets breakfast ready, with muffins or hot rolls, makes the parlour and dining-room tidy, and gets herself nicely dressed,

coiffure and all, by the time her parents are down-stairs. This, I know, she did all last summer, because their cook had a week's holiday given her, and did not "feel like" coming back for four months! She has her reward—being naturally strong, and requiring exercise for her health—in the most brilliant complexion I have seen in a girl of her age, past twenty. But, as a rule, I do believe that the vulgar Southern idea of gentility—vulgar in every sense—is summed up in one word—*idleness*. The people here, both black and white, wonder to see us busy from morning to night; suppose that we were "raised to work;" say what a pity 'tis they were not, seeing what has come upon them; can scarcely believe me when I assure them that I had never made a loaf, nor cooked a dinner (a very different thing from going into the kitchen and making a dish, and ordering cook to bring you everything you want, and leaving cook to attend to the fire, and, oh! to clean up after you), nor ironed a shirt, nor touched a hoe, nor—if I could help it—come within ten yards of a cow, before I came to

Virginia. Their astonishment at E. is beyond bounds. Everything on a farm that a man's hands can do, he can do, if need be. He understands all about machinery, can repair or improve any implement we possess, or that he has seen. One man who was doing some carpenter's job for us, after admiring E.'s ingenuity for a long time, remarked that he "reckoned he learnt that trade befo' he came out thar." E., who was repairing a plough, replied that on board her Majesty's ships they ploughed the ocean, certainly, but not with ploughs like this,—which seemed to puzzle our carpenter friend. Did I tell you that last winter he made a roller for rolling the wheat when the severe frosts were over, and a horse-rake for raking up straw, wheat, hay, &c., from the field? Everything, except the nuts, screws, and plates, was made by him, of timber from our own woods. When these implements were finished, all the people in the neighbourhood, black and white, came to look at them, admire, and criticise. I have seen a whole row squatting in front of the corn-house on a Sunday afternoon,

chewing vigorously. And you may be sure that all who had wheat to roll or to rake were not ashamed to borrow the implements E. had made, though they had been too lazy to make them themselves. I was rather glad when the novelty wore off, as it was annoying to have a lot of men loafing around and sitting on the fences all the Sunday afternoon. I cannot say they did any harm; and I daresay a Virginian would have been pleased to see them. But M. and I preferred our solitude.

The friends to whom I went for a few days' rest lived only fourteen miles from us across country; but, from being wrongly directed by various niggers on the plantations we passed through, we had ridden nearly twenty miles before we reached their house. Our progress had been necessarily slow, from the character of the country; and, having breakfasted at six, I felt ravenously hungry long before we reached our destination. E., who had his pipe to comfort him, cruelly offered me a chew of tobacco. The length of the ride was its only drawback, for the country was charming,—all up hill and

down dale. We passed through half-a-dozen beautiful woods, and crossed innumerable brooks. At one place where the stream was larger, with a steeper bank than usual, there was—or rather there had been—a bridge. Only one log was left, across which I walked, while E., who is prudent, and always looks out for squalls, and breakers, and rocks ahead, brought my mare round at a place where the bank was less steep. Maggie always behaves badly if there is the least opportunity, and runs away without giving the slightest notice; so that E. is constantly on the look-out for an accident whenever I ride her. As on this occasion she slipped, went flop into the brook, and lay in the mud till E. dragged her out, it was as well that I did trust myself to the log-bridge.

By the end of our ride we found ourselves in a plain dotted with woods, and our mountains looking quite blue and dim behind us. The place was pretty, certainly, and the roads were level and fairly kept, so that in dry weather one could have a good gallop; nevertheless, I prefer by far my own mountain home, where each win-

dow has its own distinct and particular view of river and mountain and wooded hillside. Still, it is undeniably a great convenience to be able to take the train any day, morning or evening, and go north or south with no more ado; and to have a daily post with only the trouble of walking a quarter of a mile for it, and to have plenty of decent servants ready to fill up a vacant place. Partly the reason of their being so easily procured is that in the neighbourhood is a "coloured" church—a sure source of attraction to the blacks, who love the excitement of the singing and praying, and the yearly "protracted meetings," which culminate in a "revival," in which hysterics is the principal feature. Indeed, I believe no "cullud woman" —or white woman either—would consider herself to have "got religion" properly, unless the process had been ushered in by a good, strong, unmistakable fit of hysterics.

To hear the engine whistle in the distance, to see the letters brought in every morning, made me feel as if I really were in a civilised country again. More than all did I feel drawn

within the circle of ancient custom sweet, when on Sunday morning I was told that it was time to dress for church. I had never dressed in a riding-habit on Sunday morning before; nevertheless it was dressing for church.

There was only service once a fortnight at the Episcopal Church, to which my friends belong, and as this was the off Sunday, we were to go to the Methodist Church, called Shiloh, a few miles off. This I did not object to at all, as I expected to hear at least a part of the Church service, and I knew I should enjoy the heartiness of the Methodist singing, judging by the Methodist singing I had heard in Cornwall in days gone by. I have heard German hymn-singing, both Protestant and Catholic, German chorus-singing, chorales, operatic choruses, and all the rest, but to my mind there is nothing so affecting, so soul-stirring, as a whole congregation in one of the Cornish Methodist chapels singing, as with one voice, "There is a fountain," or "There is a land of pure delight." . . . . . Off we rode, then, a party of five, through by-paths and tracks through the woods.

"Shiloh" was a plain, square, wooden building, standing in a cleared space in the midst of a dense wood. Horses were hitched up to the tree-branches and the fallen logs: a tumble-down market-waggon stood on one side; on the other, an ancient carriage, with a ghostly pair of horses that looked as if they could never draw the wretched vehicle home again. Such a miserable tale of fallen fortunes did that equipage tell! Dickens might have imagined a story for it, and Cruikshank might have illustrated it. I asked who was its owner, and got just such an answer as I might have expected. Poor old Mrs So-and-so! Such a rich family before the war! Open-handed, generous souls. Sons flinging away money. More than a hundred negroes on this one plantation. And now—you see! Yes, they want to sell their land of course, like the rest of the Virginians. But it is all worn out, and they ask too high a figure for it.

We dismounted. The gentlemen of the party hitched our horses to a convenient tree, and we stepped into Shiloh. A hymn was being sung as we rode up, and very mournful it

sounded to my ears,—the kind of mournfulness which comes, not from conviction of sin, but from ignorance of the tune. This was not the Methodist singing I remembered, but rather the singing of French Protestants at a *temple*, than which nothing can be more lugubriously hideous. Close inside the door was a bench on which stood a bucket of spring-water, with a dipper-gourd in it, for the benefit of the thirsty ones. (You must know that there is a particular kind of gourd cultivated on purpose to make water-dippers. The shell is of flinty hardness, and it makes a capital ladle, handle and all.) The water-bucket was not a superfluous piece of furniture, for many of the congregation had ridden or driven five or six miles, and the sun was powerful, though it was October. The church was quite new and clean, with whitewashed walls, a stove in one corner, and rows of benches with backs, divided by a passage on either hand. The women sat on the left and the men on the right, and the right-hand benches were well garnished with spittoons. The gentlemen of our party of course sat by their wives and daugh-

ters, according to the good old English custom. There was no pulpit proper, but instead, a wide desk on a raised platform. The preacher stood or knelt on one side or the other of this desk, as he chose. He was praying just after we entered; and as soon as he got well on into his prayer, an old man, near the pulpit, began to groan in the most dismal manner, ejaculating, "Lord!" "Amen!" "O—o—h Lord!" at intervals, which one would have thought would distract the preacher dreadfully, and make him quite forget what he was going to say. But this minister must have been accustomed to this kind of interruption, for he went straight on without making any remark, though the old man groaned and ejaculated louder and more disturbingly when the prayer touched upon a particular measure of grace for himself. It was well for me that I had been taught to keep my risible muscles under control, else I had surely laughed aloud and disgraced myself. I composed my mind as well as I could, and made a vow not to be too critical when the sermon came, but to remember all the time how many

dull, poverty-stricken sermons I had heard from clergymen of the Church of England. Suppose the coming sermon proved a bad one, the preacher was not so much to blame, seeing that he had never had the advantage of an English University education. Thus I vowed to myself. But, *bon gré mal gré*, in less than five minutes I was (mentally) up in arms against that preacher. I really could not help it. There he was, strolling up and down the platform, with his hands in his pockets, talking about that thorough gentleman, St Paul, through his nose.

He went on for nearly an hour, and oh, how weary I was of the nonsense! How can I tell you what it was like? It had neither pith, nor marrow, nor backbone. After he had done with St Paul, he branched off into a barefaced puff of the Methodist Church, which sounded very much like the advertisements of the quack medicines with which the country is flooded. Rather an anti-climax to St Paul, was it not? He puffed the Church—"body," an English Methodist would have said—as if it had been Dr Bull's Soothing Syrup. How I wished

that St Paul's spirit would make a communication to the effect that it was not the correct thing to keep hands in pockets while preaching; that such want of manners drew the attention of the congregation too much to the ugly drab colour of the garment to which the pockets belonged; also to the white waistcoat, badly fastened tie, lanky form, and sallow face of the owner of said pockets! Once or twice the creature pointed to heaven with quite a third-rate theatrical gesture. But still the spare hand remained in its pocket. However, the sermon came to an end at last, like other bad things, and then the fun began.

First putting away the big Bible which lay on the desk, the preacher dived beneath and produced from some hidden place a big white jug, which he put in place of the Bible. I supposed in my ignorance that it was his own private tipple—cider, or persimmon beer, or some such mess. But instead of turning the jug upside down as he ought after all that vocal exertion, he advanced to the front of the platform and announced that, if those who made a pro-

fession of religion at their last meeting wished to join the Church, he was ready to give them the right hand of fellowship, and to receive them into the Church by baptism. There were three modes of baptism—sprinkling, effusion, and immersion. Those who wished to be baptised by sprinkling or effusion, he could baptise now; but if there were any who wished to be baptised by immersion, he reckoned they would have to put it off to some other time, as it was getting late in the season. About a dozen boys and girls and one old woman left their seats and approached the platform. The preacher brought down two chairs, placed one on each side, and desired those who wished to be baptised by effusion or sprinkling to stand by those "chars," and those who wished to be baptised by immersion to sit on the bench opposite. Doubtless all voted October too late for immersion, for nobody went to the bench. When the candidates had each separately answered the question, whether he or she desired to be received as a member of the Church, and on answering, had been given the right hand of fellowship

by the preacher, he placed himself in front of them and, to my amazement, began to recite a very garbled version of the Church of England Baptismal Service. The difference between the sentences taken from our Prayer-book, where each word fits in and helps to form a beautiful harmonious whole that reminds one of an ancient mosaic, and the preacher's own poor, mean phrases, fit only for the commonest needs of the commonest life, or else inflated to the pitch of absurdity—the difference, I say, was not only striking, but actually painful, from the sudden revulsion of feeling it caused. I felt a spirit of reverence stealing over me, and all my amusement vanished. This mood did not last long. It was impossible to feel reverential, with the preacher acting prompter, thus: "Wilt thou renounce," &c., &c.; "the answer is, 'I renounce them all;' the answer is, 'All this I steadfastly believe;'"—and so on. Then he made them sit in the chairs, one by one, asked their names, and baptised them by pouring water from the big jug on the top of their heads, which they held carefully forward so

that the water might not trickle down their necks. He asked them each one how he would be baptised; and each one answered, by effusion. The fact was, they all knew well enough what sprinkling meant, and they wanted to find out what effusion meant,—and so they did. Then he knelt down and said the Lord's Prayer, which made me feel myself in church again. And with that the business was over. I rode homeward, feeling more impressed with the desirableness of a well-ordered ritual than I had ever been. Here was what in its intent was a solemn service, so conducted as to excite risibility more than reverence. I never saw such want of reverence in both preacher and congregation, in any Catholic or Protestant country I have lived in. All the time these baptisms were being performed, the men on the right had been chewing and spitting. For the matter of that, they had done the same all through the sermon, sprawling on the benches in the most free-and-easy way, in attitudes worthy of a pot-house. The women stared and nudged each other, whispering and tittering, as

one girl after the other took off her hat and detached the flimsy bows in her hair before sitting down in the baptising chair. It was great fun to me, I confess, though outwardly I was as grave as a judge. At the same time I felt conscious that my inward merriment was misplaced. I regretted not having been present at the revival which preceded the baptism; for the revival as at present constituted being a mere "carnal device," and in no way partaking of the nature of a sacrament, I should have felt that my amusement was quite legitimate. One lady who, though a Methodist, attended the meetings *pour se distraire* (you may translate that literally, for these meetings really are "distracted"), assured me that the scene was unique, when one after the other, after praying and groaning and crying for a certain time—being also prayed over and groaned over by the minister and elders — would suddenly jump up, exclaiming, "Glory!" "I've got religion!" "I'm saved!" "Hallelujah!" One old maid in her excitement jumped quite off the ground with a loud whoop.

"She jumped quite high, and I heard her boots knock together," said my informant. "And then she rushed round and kissed all her friends and acquaintances on the men's side." (Let us hope they were all her cousins and her uncles.) Now one would give a great deal to see that.

LETTER VI.

One still February afternoon we set out to call on a neighbour. The last half-mile lay through a lane on Mrs ——'s own property. As we picked our way along what appeared to be the dry bed of a water-course rather than a private road, we asked each other whether it was possible for a road, if once properly made, ever to become so bad. How had Mrs ——'s carriage ever travelled over it, in the time when she was a rich woman, before the war? In front of the gate, leading into what would be in England the private grounds, was a big puddle where pigs had been wallowing. That puddle never dried up till July. We skirted it with some difficulty, and managed, by dint of much determination, to both open and shut the gate. As we went on, the signs of neglect and decay became more

apparent. On either side was a corn-field, with the maize-stalks left as they were when the corn had been pulled in November, unploughed, sodden with the melting of the snow; not a blade of grass or tuft of clover to be seen anywhere; only brambles and dead weed-stalks, six feet high, between the corn rows. We passed a few neglected, worn-out fruit-trees, then a large barn and out-house; then the dwelling-house appeared in the distance. It was a white-washed frame building on a brick foundation, about half as big as the barn, with a high-pitched roof, a wide porch raised well above the ground, and broken windows on either side.

The approach to the gate of the enclosure immediately surrounding the house—the "door-yard" as they call it in America—was by an avenue—such an avenue! Half the trees had been cut down. Those that remained had been lopped of their branches, and looked as uncomfortable as pollards always do. A few trees and bushes scattered within the fence gave a somewhat home-like air to the place, till one came closer, and then it appeared chilly and comfortless

indeed, though the day was warm. The little gate was hanging on one hinge; the steps trembled beneath our weight as we ascended; the house-door stood open; within was darkness and emptiness. We knocked and waited, and knocked again. (E. told us afterwards, that instead of wearing out our knuckles, we should have stood outside and called, "Oh Mrs ——!" which would have brought her immediately.) When our patience was nearly exhausted, a door at the end of a long passage opened, and a very old woman came towards us. She was extremely tall, bent, with a shaking head, a face like parchment, a formidable hooked nose, and large, gaunt, dirty hands. A yellow, unstarched net-cap added much to the general wretchedness of her appearance. On her poor old shoulders was a tippet of some thin woollen material; her dress of black stuff looked ready to fall to pieces from sheer decay, and had, alas! a very visible hole at the left elbow. She gave one the impression of not having another garment on her besides that miserable old gown. M. took her card and mine from her card-case, and said, with

great politeness, "I came to call on Mrs ——." "Oh yes," the old woman said, not taking the cards; "you are Mistress ——." "I am. And," interrogatively, "you are Mrs ——?" "Yes. Come in. Glad to see you." She took us into a room on the left hand. There was a gaping fireplace with a smouldering log in it; a big old clock, very ugly and common-looking, stood on the mantelpiece; a square of worn-out Brussels carpet, much patched, lay on the floor to serve as a rug; behind the door was a ponderous bed; under the broken window an old horse-hair sofa. A door opposite the one by which we had entered opened into a bare, miserable yard, with some out-houses more or less dilapidated in the background. The old lady gave us chairs, and seated herself on the sofa—the most draughty seat in the whole room. M. thanked her for the cloves of garlic which she had sent us a few days before. "Oh," she said, "that's nothing. We have too much, and are glad to get *shet* of it." Presently a chubby girl ran in, and looked as if she would run out again when she saw us, but was brought forward and

introduced as "my grandchild Evy." She apologised shyly for her dirty hands, saying that she had been gardening; and going behind the door, produced from some unknown recess a tin basin, then went to a closet, washed her hands, dried them with a towel which hung from a nail at the mantelpiece, then seated herself and did her best to talk. Her eyes sparkled, and her chubby mouth parted into a broad grin when I told her she must come down and get some plants from my hotbed as soon as the weather was settled. She was "mighty fond" of gardening, she said. Yes, Evy "was most always mussing up her hands and her dress in that garden," the grandmother said. At which I smiled sympathetically at Evy — for was I not always doing the same thing myself?—and Evy, seeing that I was not shocked at the fact of her "mussing" herself, smiled back at me. I noticed that the old lady had a short red-clay pipe with a bamboo stem stuck into her apron-band. "Ah," she said, taking it out, "this is the only comfort I have left. I never thought I should come to like my pipe, when I was young like you. But I learnt

to be glad of it after the war, when troubles came so thick upon me." That was the only allusion she made to the altered state of things. As soon as we rose to go, the old woman, who had been rather stiff and dignified, unbent, and asked us to stay longer. But that seems to be *de rigueur* here. We alleged another call as an excuse, and departed. The chubby child came with us, saying she would show us where her mother lived. We went a little way down hill, past some tumble-down, roofless negro cabins, to a log-house daubed with red clay. At the door stood a yellow-faced, white-lipped woman in black, with a blue-and-white bib-apron and starched collar on, but no brooch or ribbon, and—a crinoline! which harmonised badly with the log-house. We went up the usual three steps, and entered. The first thing that struck me was a very big bed placed right in front of the door, covered with the handsomest counterpane I have seen since I left England. There were mahogany tables and chairs, old-fashioned, but well kept and finely polished; there was a chest of drawers

with a very large looking-glass on it, well-polished brass fire-irons, a kitchen-dresser, and a few other odds and ends. Close by the large looking-glass was a chink in the wall, through which I could see the sky. Close by the window where I sat was another. There was yet a third by the bed, on a line with the floor. In spite of this dilapidation the place was exceedingly neat, the floor well scrubbed and beautifully clean, kept so, as I found afterwards, by the child Evy and an elder sister. There was not a vestige of book or newspaper anywhere, any more than there was in the old woman's room. Mrs —— seated herself on the horse-hair sofa, and kept up a gentle moan all the time. In this respect she was less well-bred than her mother-in-law. The old woman had lost her husband and two sons during the war, and all her property except the land belonging to her, which, of course, was of little use, as she could not pay negroes to work it. The younger woman had lost her husband and ten relations, either in battle or from illness contracted during exposure; she had also lost all her worldly

goods except the furniture in the log-house. On the other hand, she had three very nice, good-looking children, who were growing up a comfort and satisfaction to her. These children are joint-possessors of a small portion of land, and will have something more at the grandmother's death; so that, although they are extremely poor, still they are not altogether penniless. One must forgive a great deal in a woman with neuralgia and a spine complaint; but it was nevertheless absurd to see the unceasing effort on the poor creature's part to make us understand how different all this was from anything she had been accustomed to before the war, and how much she disliked it. Now, if it had been the chinks in the walls, or the leaks in the shingle roof! I shivered as I thought of the awful winter we had just passed through; and these chinks were there then, and the snow was drifting in, and the winds of heaven playing round these unfortunate people, who certainly did not look as if they could endure cold a whit better than I can; but that she did not grumble about.

She apologised abjectly for Evy's dress, because it had no ruffle (flounce). It had got so torn she had been obliged to take it off, and she had "fixed up" the dress "so it would do for gardening." She hadn't been used to dress the child so; but since the war she had been obliged to do as best she could. She disliked living in the country; she liked "a city" much better, where she could have "church privileges." Translated into English, that means she would have preferred living in a village that had a Baptist chapel in it. She informed us, with a solemn shake of the head, that she still considered herself a member of the church at ——, and had never had her name taken off the roll of church members, although she had left the place for years. I could not tell then why this was told us with such a solemn air; but I learnt afterwards that non-attendance of a member of any congregation for a certain length of time, was sufficient reason for striking his name off the roll of church members. This would seem to be a sort of minor excommunication. No "church member" can be re-

ceived into another congregation, even of the same denomination, without a letter of recommendation from the pastor of the congregation to which he first belonged; and if he wishes to join, not another congregation, but another church or denomination, it is quite optional with the pastor to give or withhold the letter of recommendation. For instance, suppose a Baptist desires to join the Episcopal Church: as likely as not the Baptist minister would refuse him a commendatory letter. In their way Episcopal clergymen are quite as tyrannical. I know of a case where some Scotch people were refused the sacrament because they had not been confirmed in the Church of England. It seems to me from what I hear, that ministers of all denominations are, so to speak, forced to act in a tyrannical manner, in order to vindicate their position. They are paupers and beggars, all of them, and an occasional act of tyranny is necessary to show a congregation that the man who is obliged periodically to send round the hat, has the whip-hand of them after all. For instance,

I know a young fellow—a very well-behaved young fellow indeed, an Englishman—who has never been known to get drunk, and who attends church, and gets his negroes together and reads the Bible to them. But this young fellow dearly loves a dance, and above all a round dance; and the clergyman of the church he attended would allow of no dancing among his "church members." The young man laughed at the prohibition. His father was a clergyman, and his uncle a bishop, and they ought to know whether or not it was wicked to dance. So he danced on week-days when he had a chance, and went to church on Sundays, and sang in the choir. Said the Episcopal clergyman, "I shall excommunicate you." "But you can't," said the Englishman. "But I will," said the clergyman. And sure enough, the next time the sacrament was administered, this poor boy found himself passed over, to his extreme mortification and disgust. After I heard that, I no longer regretted that our nearest church, served by this same clergyman, was eight miles off.

We heard lately an amusing instance of ignorance in a Methodist preacher. This man called on an English neighbour, and requested his aid, as he wished to set up a Sunday-school. Mr —— explained that he was a Church of England man, but that nevertheless he would be glad to help, as a Sunday-school would, doubtless, be a good thing for the neighbourhood. "Yes, sir," said the preacher, "when we are at Rome we must do as the Romans do, *according to the Scriptures.*"

Not very far—that is to say, within two miles—lives a lady, who must have been a sort of female Legree, if half the stories I hear of her are true. She looks quiet and subdued enough now, poor soul! and well she may, with a son, "a white gentleman," in the penitentiary—as they call the prison—for horse-stealing. Most of the black people we employ belonged formerly to this lady or some of her family. One or two have their good points, but the younger women are so worthless that we never have them even as field-workers if we can avoid it. The man who is now in prison for horse-steal-

ing is credited even by the white people with having whipped an old woman to death. One of E.'s tenants, a white man, told E. that Mrs —— wanted him to come and be her overseer before the end of the war: he could have managed to look after the negroes, though he was too worn down with fever to work himself. But he refused, because he knew she did not give her "folks" enough to eat; and it was not fair to expect a good day's work out of starving niggers, any more than out of a starving horse.

Let old aunt Caroline tell the story of the whipping.

"Was it true," I asked, "that such a thing was ever done?"

"Yes *in*—deed! De ole woman, you see, she had fever, and she couldn't go; and ole Mis' ——, she always keep de folks goin'. Dis ole woman, she come along with a basket on her head, an' I look out ob de window an' see her, an' she jes' drop down by de window, an' say she can't tak' de basket no mo'. I was makin' corn-cake, an' I give her one. An' jes' then Mas' Dick come along with a hickory-stick in

his han', an' he give her a good cut with de stick, say he reckon that make her jump up right smart. But she didn't go; she jes' stop thar, foolish like. An' he whip her—he whip her right down to de cider-press, 'way down de hill whar Miss Sally Ann live. You know it. Well, she jes' lay down by de press, an' then he tied her up and whipped her. An' when he done whippin' she was dead."

"Was he not horrified when he found out what he had done?" I asked.

Aunt Caroline grinned. "Pshaw, Miss Ma'y! think he car'?"

"But to whip the poor thing to death!"

"W—ell, you see, ole Mis', she like dat. She always keep de folks goin'; an' if dey didn't go, she whip um. Now you see dat ar Dick, her youngest son, him what took de horse, he was *always* whippin' de folks roun'. I seen him go in de wood, an' cut him a big new hickory-stick, an' cut you about with it, like if you was one of dem ar steers. He was mighty bad, he was; jes' like his ma'. She always throwing somethin' at you. Once she throw de carving-knife

at Sally, an' it stuck in dat chile's hip, I *tell* you. You all say Sally ain't no 'count. All you wouldn't be no 'count nuther, if you'd been beaten about and jumped on like dat chile was."

Sally is one of the creatures whom E. will not allow to enter the house. I do not know whether she was old enough while she was a slave to have profited by her mistress's instructions in the ways of propriety and morality, supposing Mrs —— had been inclined to give any, but I do not think that at the time of the emancipation she was old enough to be very bad. I fear that her sin lies at her own door. However, I can't help feeling sorry for her. I send her medicine when she is ill, and food whenever aunt Caroline asks it for her. I would try to persuade her to "get religion," only that the negroes cannot be made to see that there is the slightest connection between morality and religion. Sally, and the many whom I know who are just like her, are a hard nut for me to crack. What is one to do? How can one begin to teach them, when their own

black ministers break all the ten commandments? when, for instance, one of these gentry will desire a strange preacher to "tell de folks 'bout gettin' 'ligion, an' not about not takin' hogs an' shotes an' chickens, 'cause dat sort o' discourse mighty discomposing to dis congregation." This is a fact; not a made-up story.

I go back to what is "mighty discomposing" to me—*i.e.*, Sally.

"She must have done something very bad, surely, for Mrs —— to throw the carving-knife at her. I hardly know how to believe such a thing. Now what had she been doing?" And I look sternly at aunt Caroline, to see whether she flinches. She does not in the least.

"De ole lady say she don't go fast enough, dat all. I been dar, cookin' her breakfast one side de fire, an' Sally grindin' de coffee on de oder; an' she sit thar wi' de fire-shovel in her hand, an' fus' she knock me, an' den Sally. Seem like she must have some one to knock about whenever she feel like it."

"Perhaps if she had corrected Master Dick a

little when he was a boy, he would not have turned out such a ne'er-do-weel."

Aunt Caroline grins. "Oh, she never tech one o' dem." Then solemnly, "Miss Ma'y, many an' many's de time I've had to go of a Sunday morning an' take Mas' Dick out of his bed an' wash him, when he was as big an' tall 'most as a grown man. He got to wash his self now, I reckon. Yes, you're right thar. He spent all his money, an' he spent all his wife's money, an' den she died, an' I was mighty sorry for her, 'cause she always beggin' him to do somethin', an' he never would. An' then he went away. An' they do say he begged his way back from Missouri, an' you see how ragged he was when he went up de road; he jes' like an ole nigger."

Other instances has aunt Caroline given me at various times of her former mistress's cruelty and oppression. One day I asked her how it was she had bald spots on the back of her head. "Who has been pulling out your wool?" said I.

She did not feel at all insulted. Quite the

contrary. She said, with her broadest grin,—"Ole Mis' did dat."

"'Ole Mis'' did everything, I think."

"I tell you how it was. She throw a heater at me, an' it struck my head an' make a so'; an' when de new skin come, it jes' like dat, an' de har never grow no mo'."

"Were you stunned?"

"No, ma'am; on'y it make me feel bad an' foolish like. Laws, Miss Ma'y, she done worse dan dat!—she whip me, so I run away an' stop in de woods with nothin' to eat for days. One time I go to old John Crawford—he a white man what make shoes—an' he go back with me, an' make ole Mis' promise she wouldn't whip me; but she commence again, pretty soon."

N.B.—I have never heard a negro say "begin." It is always "commence," with a great emphasis on the first syllable.

"I stay with ole Mis' two years after de wo'. She tell us we shouldn't never be free; we belong to her, an' she kill us befo' she make us free. In de slavery times, I often wish she sell me, 'cause she so bad. She say, you needn't

to think I sell you, 'cause dat make you too proud (pleased). And when Mas' Dick come back, she right mad. Dat was after de surrenda. An' she say, no, they no bisn'ss to surrenda. An' he say, she know nothin' 'bout it. Then she get mad. O—o—oh—whie, how mad she get! You don't know my ole Mis', I tell you. She throw one o' my chil'en on de fire, 'cause it always cried."

"Now that is too horrible. Do you mean me to believe that?"

"You needn't if you don't like," says aunt Caroline. "I was this a-way. I out ploughin', an' dat baby want peart, an' want to be nussed an' tended; an' it always cryin', an' ole Mis' get so mad with it, one day she throw it on de fire; an' when I come in, dat baby back all burnt. Den she send for ole Dr Chetwynd, an' he found out she throw dat chile on de fire. Den he say he never come to de house no mo'; he won't go to de house whar dey burns up de folks."

"And the baby died? Wasn't it dreadful, aunt Caroline?"

"Oh, I got no time to think 'bout it! I jes'

got to keep goin'. When Grace was born, she wouldn't let me have a soul with me. I say I feel mighty sick, and she say, 'Pshaw! go 'long an' do yer bisness.' An' I jes' lay dar in de kitchen, an' nobody come near me, an' 'twas after sundown, my little boy Charles peeped in, an' I tell him go for aunt Delphy, an' beg her come quick. I believe dat why Grace always so slow—so slow. She can't make haste to save her life. I got so blind afterwards, for mo' dan a year I hardly see my way." Then aunt Caroline brightens up once more and grins. "My mother was de only one of us all Mis' didn't dar' knock about. You see, she so blind she go 'long with a stick. She tak' water from de spring like that, jes' feel her way, so. Well, she say no use for ole Mis' to be knockin' her, 'cause she knock too; she not let ole Mis' come nigh her. Ole Mis' say she never could do nothin' with aunt Phœbe. After de surrenda, when she got so she couldn't see nohow, ole Mis' send her to de poorhouse, 'cause she say she can't keep her no mo'. Well, soon as I could, I went down; an' Charlotte, an' Sally,

an' I done tol' de folks I come for my mother. Well, dey say she better stay dar, 'cause I got nuffin fur her to eat. But she say she go 'long with us. An' we got home *at* las', an' de ole lady she walk all dose seventeen miles; fus' one help her 'long an' den de odder, an' I was mighty glad to get her home."

Aunt Caroline always speaks well of her old master. "He would never let ole Mis' knock de folks about, an' he made dem boys behave theirselves. We all was mighty sorry when he died. He used to have tomatoes planted here an' there in the fields, that us folks might have 'em to eat when we was out hoeing. An' we 'bleege to nuss de babies, an' not let 'em lie an' cry. Yes *in*—deed."

With all that horrible subjection of body and soul, there was on the part of the slaves a freedom of manner and speech to the masters which we should not tolerate from free white servants. The negro behaviour reminds me sometimes of a dog, who, when dripping with rain, will rush in and nestle close to his master or mistress; or he will, just after being caressed, turn round

and begin a vigorous scratching and biting, quite unconscious that his behaviour is offensive, and that you wish him a hundred miles off. We may be at breakfast on a cold morning; suddenly the door opens, and in rushes our charwoman, aunt Delphy. She neither shuts the door nor says a word, but rushes up to the stove and diligently warms her hands. I say, in a tone of inquiry, "Well, aunt Delphy?" She grins, "Well, Mis' Ma'y?" Perhaps E. is not there and she wishes to speak to him. Instead of saying, "Can I speak to Mr E.?" she says abruptly, "Whar's Mas' E.?" Perhaps she only remarks, "It's mighty cold, I tell you." If then for a time she says no more, I know she is come to ask for something. I do not try to help her out, because I know perfectly well that it is not shamefacedness that keeps her from proceeding to business—only the etiquette which is practised here by both black and white, which makes it a rule never to come to the point at once. So she stays for a long while warming her hands, while I quietly eat my breakfast. At last she bursts out with, "O Mas' E.," and the request follows

headlong. Sometimes I know she only comes for a breakfast, by her saying in a casual manner, "Reckon I'll put on some water an' wash up dem things when you done eatin'." Sometimes, if I want a room scrubbed or stoves polished, I say (after she has been long enough in the room to inhale the aroma of the coffee), "I suppose you breakfasted long ago, aunt Delphy?"

"Now you know I haven't," she says.

Then I make my bargain. "I want so and so done, *and if you like*[1] to stay and do it, well and good. And you had better get your breakfast at once." Then I give her her ration and get rid of her, and finish my breakfast in peace.

Dan, the boy-of-all-work, is just as bad for coming in anywhere, and warming himself in the most unceremonious manner. I send him to the sitting-room with an armful of wood. Ten minutes later I find him crouched on the rug, warming his hands. The other day I ordered him to sort a quantity of onions and

[1] One would suppose I was asking a favour; whereas, this is the only place where she gets paid in money, or where she is fairly remunerated in any way whatever.

capsicums, which had been laid on the verandah to dry. In he came from time to time to warm himself, and there he stood staring at me all the while in the *coolest* manner, coming and going just when he pleased. Do you know that I had not the moral courage to forbid his coming in, though it was very disagreeable to me to have the animal there, staring with all his might out of those round, velvety, expressionless eyes of his. I went so far, however, as to order him to remove his hat, and, strange to say, he has remembered the order, and pulls it off whenever he enters the house.

We are trying hard to teach the creature manners and morals, but whether we shall have the least success is doubtful. E. teaches him reading and arithmetic in the evening, and finds him, not stupid, but incorrigibly lazy. Aunt Caroline, by way of recommending him to the place, assured me he could count "right smart." She believed he didn't know how to read: she thought he could write a little. As to his age, all his own mother knew was that he was born "befo' de wa'." We suppose his

real age to be twelve or thirteen, though he gives himself out as much older. His mother is a member of a Baptist (coloured) church. One Sunday evening E. tried a little catechising.

"Did you ever hear of God, Dan?"

"Oyessir. He was the man that made the world."

Then E. tried to explain that God was not a man. "Can a man see in the dark?"

"No; I reckon not."

"Well, God can see in the dark."

"Pitch-dark?" says Dan, with a grin.

"Yes, pitch-dark. He can see what you are thinking about."

Dan stared and grinned, more in astonishment than irreverence, I think; for, so far, we find the blacks less wanting in reverence than the whites.

"Is dat so?"

"Yes, that is really so." After expatiating a little on this point, E. said, "Have you been told of Jesus Christ, Dan?"

"Never heard of him," said Dan.

"But does not your mother belong to a Baptist church?"

"Oyes, she been baptised."

"Did she never tell you what she heard in church?"

"Never," said Dan.

"Did you never go to church with her?"

"Oh, sometimes, when I was little."

"Did you never hear of Hope, or Faith, or Charity?"

"Never heard nothin' 'bout 'em."

"Did you ever hope for anything, Dan?"

"Yes, I hopes for things sometimes."

"For turkey at Christmas, eh?"

"Oyes." The mention of turkey galvanised Dan for a moment; but it was evident he was getting tired of being questioned, just like a child, so E. let him go. Now, this boy is above the average, I should say. If he is what we call incorrigibly lazy, his fellows are lazier. I look at him with a shudder as I think this woolly-headed, coffee-coloured animal will, in a few years, be an elector. With less intelligence in many ways than a well-bred English dog, he

will actually vote for a presidential candidate, —help, as likely as not, to keep some good man out, and vote some bad man in; and women with brains, like Miss Hosmer, Charlotte Cushman, or Miss Maria Mitchell the astronomer, have no vote, and probably never will. What is most distressing as regards this boy is his inveterate habit of lying. I dislike that more than the stealing. He cannot tell lies from fright, because he is never scolded for breaking things; but, on the contrary, assured that he will never be scolded if he comes and tells when he has had an accident. But it is not the slightest use.

Do you not think it must have been enough to make any Southerner lie down and die to know that his country was to be governed by a majority more brutish even than this wretched boy?

I can present you with a specimen of negro legislators' sense—or nonsense, which is coming home to us at present, the subject being that vexed question the dog-tax. I must premise that each county can decide whether it will

have a dog-tax or not. Our county has none; and until it has, E. has made up his mind that he will keep no sheep.

Last session a petition was presented to the Legislature sitting at Richmond from the people of Bath county, urging the importance of the dog-tax. A discussion on the subject brought a negro delegate from Greenville county to his feet. The gentleman—I quote from the report of the proceedings—disregarding the fact that another gentleman had the floor, rose, and in a loud voice gave vent to the following eloquent appeal: "Mr Speaker, I arises to a pint of discussion, and to explain a few words of kinder conversation to you, as it has been long my desires to do; but has no opportunity presenting until this time at present, and which I conducts myself as a gentleman ter both black and white. In all this 'lection doings and speeching I have keeped my mouth shut; but when you talks about dogs you kin count me in—yes, sah!—has owned dogs—got dogs now, as good as ever tree'd a coon; that's so! and when you remarks on killing them fellers,

you knows you's treading on my toes, an' you bound to hear me growl. Why fore should attacks be instituted on this useful friend of both black and white? Which are the most benefit to a man, a dog, or something that ain't no 'count? Sense is sense, an' dar an't no foolin' 'bout a dog. Come at me far an' squar. Politics am one thing and dogs is another. Whenever you 'tacks dogs you breakin' up infringement on sassengers, an' you will have to swaller yer own resolution. Min' what I tell you. And des mo' wool-gatherin' in de governor's message den der is dogs in de United States. Whar's de use of dis infliction? No, sah! Never shall old Greenville county be instituted for sich a position on dogs. Now come on wid yer discussion."

Now this is very laughable to you, no doubt; but it cannot be laughable when such negro logic as the above actually affects the wellbeing of the white proprietors. Bath county is wild and mountainous, and sparsely inhabited. It requires sheep, as an element of prosperity, even

more than we do, and will probably be just as long in getting the necessary restraint put on dogs. Meanwhile, curdom flourishes.

I daresay you may have heard from Northern sources instances of the so-called cruel oppression still practised in the South, the white people refusing to allow their black fellow-citizens to associate with them in travelling, or in places of public amusement. Probably you have heard of the 'Civil Rights Bill—the last instance of oppressive legislation directed against this trodden-down country. Of course it was not the slightest good. A Southern hotel-keeper is the master of his own house, and for the matter of that, can refuse entrance to a white man or woman if he so pleases. If the reception or refusal of this guest or that can be made a subject for legislation, how was it that no one thought it worth while to bring in a Bill for the better protection of the Jews, when Hilton, the proprietor of one of the big Northern summer hotels, refused to admit Jews as boarders,—Jews equal in wealth and standing almost to our Rothschilds and Montefiores? Yet no one

has thought of doing such a thing—certainly not the Jews themselves. It was said by the promoters of the Civil Rights Bill, that the negroes when travelling had no place to go to for food and shelter. This is simply not true. In all the large towns, negro eating and lodging houses abound, where, thanks to a beautiful climate, food is cheap and plentiful, and fair in quality; and as to the accommodation, it is quite equal to negro wants, and very likely better than the average negro cares to have. There are no grand hotels, certainly, for negro gentlemen, but then there are no negro gentlemen yet. Now, supposing such a thing possible as that a negro should be unable to procure accommodation anywhere, except at an hotel for white people. I can imagine it possible that the proprietor would allow him to dine with the negro servants;—and there would his proper place be. Be very sure of this: that any hotel-keeper who would allow a black man to sit down to dinner in the same dining-room with white people, might as well shut his doors at once. These Southerners no more choose to be cheek-by-jowl

with their former slaves, than the Northerners choose to bring in Biddie from the kitchen and Pat from the stable, to join the dinner or the evening party. At the same time, the Southerners do not mind travelling with their own servants any more than we should mind taking a nurse or lady's-maid with us at home. Every lady I saw travelling with children had her nurse with her. No one was squeamish about sitting by the nurses any more than if they had been white people. But then the nurses were clean and respectable, and in attendance on their mistresses. Now I think that, though I am not a Southerner, I should object strongly to the neighbourhood—in a car or at a hotel table—of such a specimen as the Greenville delegate whose speech I have transcribed.

I have been trying to make a collection of negro hymns and songs. They seem rather mixed. Do not suppose that they are at all in the style of the Christy Minstrels. I hear them singing sometimes in the fields, and have tried to remember the tunes and write them down, but have never succeeded. There is a long-

drawn note, a triplet, either on a note above or below, a *trillo caprino;* another long note, either a shriek or a shout; and then the song drops to the key-note again. Sometimes the long note partakes of the *trillo caprino*, or is a cross between it and the *tremolo.* But this is only a description of their country singing. In the town I have heard the men and boys belonging to a tobacco-factory sing in choruses in the most creditable manner. I was told that the proprietor paid a master to teach them, as he found they worked so much better when they sang together.

This is the last negro hymn I heard; it is of comparatively late date:

Right away to hebben on de in—gine!
Right away to hebben on de in—gine!
All cullud folks aboard dis train—
All cullud folks aboard dis train.
Go 'way, white folks, no place for you,—
All darkies come aboard.
Right away to hebben on de in—gine!

Here is a hymn for baptism;—baptism with the negroes always meaning immersion:

"'Way down under de water
I'm ready an' willin' to go.
I got good 'ligion in my soul—
I'm ready an' willin' to go.
I want to go to heaven, right early in de mornin',—
I'm ready an' willin' to go."

"Oh come along, brother, come along;
Come along to de promised land!
Brother Daniel was a-prayin',
Two or three times a-day.
King Jesus hoist de window,
To hear brother Daniel pray.
Oh come along, brother, come along!"

"Blow, Gabriel, blow your horn!
I have the lights again.
Come deaf, come dumb,
I have the lights of kingdom come;
I was deaf and I was dumb,
I have the lights again."

"Shoutin' go 'round, shoutin' go 'round,
Shoutin' go 'round de walls of Zion.
Sister, don't you feel determined
To walk round de walls of Zion?"

"I'm on my road to de promised land,
You are on your road to hell.
Lord, ain't dat 'nuff to grieve me,
Grievin' 'bout judgment-day?
De hosses white, de garment bright—
I'm on my road to God."

"Some are rich and some are poor,
But I'm de poorest of them all,—
Good Lord, I'm but a ramblin' soul,
Fightin' my way to God."

"Holy, holy, my Lord,
New-born again.
Here's yer robe, come try it on,
New-born again."

"My mother is gone,
To leave all behind.
Lord, I wish I was there!
To wing and wing with the angels,
To play on the golden harp,
An' I wish I was there!"

"I hear from the toom (tomb) a doleful song;
My ears is tender cryin'."

(On the last of these two lines I have had a controversy with aunt Caroline. I maintain that nobody's ears can become tender with crying. And she says, "That's the way they folks sing it, anyhow.")

"Mary weeps and Martha moans (mourns),
O Lord, rock-a-my soul,
In the bosom of Abraham."

"One day as I was walking along,
The Lord I put my trust upon;
Of all the beasts that's in the field,
I thought I was the worst."

"Oh thanks be to Jesus—
Hallelujah!
Oh praise ye the Lord!"

I said to aunt Caroline, "How do you get your hymns? who makes them for you?"

"Dunno. We jes' gets um."

"But some one must make them first."

"Edmund Wallace, de cullud preacher, he tells um at de meetin'."

"Does he make them?"

"No'm. He jes' gets um."

"Has he got them written down?"

"*You* can write them down if you like," says aunt Caroline.

Which I intend to do. But she tells me that in the coloured city churches they have books just like the white folks. These printed hymns, however, would have little of the genuine negro element left in them. I have found it impossible to get at any consecutive set of verses. They seem to consider any group of four or five lines a hymn. This they repeat over and over, with louder shouts each time. A hymn with a chorus at the end, or a "Hallelujah," is always a

greater favourite than one without either. One favourite chorus is—

"O de ole time 'ligion,
De ole time 'ligion,
De ole time 'ligion
Is good enough for me."

This is repeated *ad lib.*, with shouts and waving of arms, and cries of "Oh, I'm so happy! so happy! so happy!" from the elder brethren and sisters. Once aunt Bithynia, in her excitement, forgot to keep her eye on her basket which she had put down when she began throwing her arms about. A nigger stole the dinner out of her basket on that occasion. So now she combines rejoicing in the Lord with an eye to business, thus—

(Waving her arms wildly) "Tank de Lord! Oh, I'm so happy! so happy! so happy! Amen! Whoop!" (Turns round) "You nigger, don't you tech my noo hat, will you?—Bress de Lord! Glory!" (Sings—)

"I'm goin' to hebben
Right early in de mornin'.
Won't you come along with me?
Sister, won't you come along?"

"You nigger, if you tech dat ar chicken, I kill you. Dat *my* chicken, sah! You go 'way from here."

As likely as not the chicken has been stolen from the fowl-house of aunt Bithynia's mistress. But as I said before, the negroes cannot see any connection between morality and religion.

People talk glibly about going out to convert the heathen. Here are we, with these few heathen at our doors, and we know not what to do. Our task would be easier, I think, if they were real heathen worshipping wooden gods. But how likely are they to listen to our teachings of the necessity of personal holiness, when their own preachers abstain from "pestering" them about "such little things," and tell them all they want is to "get 'ligion"? We have the Bible; the preacher has the Bible; but "cullud minister don't talk that a-way;" and "that a-way" is not the way they want. They don't want to be told "that God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." If white folks' God is made like that, they prefer a God of another sort.

I wish sometimes that I could have a few very young negroes to bring up as an experiment, quite away from any negro or mean white influence. At the same time I am quite aware of the fatuity of the wish, and that it would be, if gratified, a mere putting aside, not a solution, of the question,—How to do good to the souls of the few black sheep here in this wilderness?

LETTER VII.

It is astonishing how long one may go on living under a false impression. I had believed till now that we were living in the backwoods, or at any rate on the outskirts of them. But I have been assured that I am quite ignorant on the subject: that when we have a store, a blacksmith's shop, a church, a post-office, and a doctor, all within eight miles, we cannot be considered even as skirting the backwoods. Better than that, we are—to speak broadly—in an aristocratic neighbourhood. I cannot quite say that it rains earls and dukes yet—perhaps it will by-and-by, if we are properly thankful for our other privileges. What will you say when I tell you that within two miles of us lives the descendant of the Earl of Scotland? She (it is a she) called one day. We

thought she came on sordid business matters, not wholly unconnected with poultry. So she did; but that was by the by. She left with us a certain cock and two hens, and in exchange pocketed certain greenbacks. She kindly placed her hand on M.'s shoulder, and gave her good advice on the management of poultry. "My good woman," said M., edging herself away from under the hand of this daughter of earls, "I kept fowls long before I came here." Perhaps it was owing to this speech that the cock died a few days after.

You need not laugh at all this, because it is all true. This lady's father was a Robertson, and everybody knows the Robertsons of England. I daresay you know some. This particular Robertson's father was Earl of Scotland. So it all lies in a nut-shell. If you don't believe, just go and see her. She lives in a little house up a little hill, across the creek that runs over the highroad. There was a bridge there not so long ago—a neat wooden bridge, built by an Englishman, who, not knowing better, offered to build it at his own expense if the neighbours

would keep it in repair. The last freshet washed the bridge away, and the neighbours repaired it in the old Southern fashion, by throwing a long pine-trunk across. It is little stouter than a man's arm at one end, and I go across trembling and clinging to a slender pole slung on top of the water-gate by dead vine-branches. You cannot help knowing the house. It is a little bigger than my fowl-house, but then it has a chimney, which makes all the difference.

As you come near, a few half-starved curs will rush out and bark wildly; a long-legged, razor-backed sow will from her lounge grunt surprise at a stranger in the middle of the path. You either give her a kick to make her get out of the way, or you walk round her. I prefer walking round, myself. Just go into the house and "get acquainted." Perhaps you will hear somebody snoring on the bed. It is only the husband sleeping off his whisky. After a little preliminary conversation, the good woman will inform you that she is a Robertson herself, and ask whether you know the

Robertsons of England. You do or you do not, as it may happen. Then she tells you how that *her* father was a Robertson, and how that *his* father was Earl of Scotland. Ask to see her pedigree. She will bring out an old book from the cupboard where she keeps her bread-tray and meal-sifter. Perhaps a rat may run past when she opens the cupboard; but that is nothing when you are accustomed to it. Now that book is an English book, and it has J. Robertson written inside, pretty nearly all over the fly-leaf. And that J. Robertson was her father. And *his* father was Earl of Scotland. And, as I said, it all lies in a nut-shell.

I am not sure whether this woman can read and write. I should not like to ask her. One of my neighbours, on seeing some copies done in oil from the originals when we were in Italy, remarked that she used to be a good judge of oil-paintings. She hadn't seen very many, it was true, but she understood them. She used to be able to criticise works of art.

"That must have been a great pleasure," I observed. "Yes'm." Formerly she used to be

in the habit of seeing quite a large number of engravings and chromos—especially chromos; but that was "befo' the wo'." Since then she had had no opportunity, and in consequence she had quite lost her critical eye. I sympathised. So perhaps this royal Robertson knew how to read and write "befo' the wo'." I assure you she is not insane; nor is she a monomaniac, though she is undoubtedly under a delusion. As every falsehood is said to have some germ of truth in it, so there may be some germ of truth here for aught I know. The woman's father may be descended from — say — some Scotch laird. In the lapse of time they may have come to talk of the Scotch *laird* as a Scotch *lord;* and thus *per saltum* they may have got to the Earl of Scotland.

What shall I say of our other scions of aristocracy? One of them is descended, in a general way, from all the English nobility—that is, she has a very extensive ancestry among the F. F. V.'s. (I believe I mentioned before that these mysterious letters are not American for "bug," but simply mean, First Families of

Virginia.) And everybody knows that the F. F. V.'s were the English nobility who first came out when Virginia belonged to the Red Man, Princess Pocahontas's ancestor. They called the country Virginia, and they became the F. F. V.'s. This lady's maiden name was Green—a name which frequently occurs in the 'British Peerage;' and her papa kept a store, and bartered tobacco and corn for town commodities. But that is nothing. He was a perfect gentleman, who always subscribed regularly for his church newspaper, and had a fresh ham on his dinner-table every day throughout the year. That is more than most members of the British aristocracy can say for themselves. Which among them all, tell me, can boast of cutting into the middle of a new ham every day? Which of them owns to-day 182½ pigs, all in different stages of fattening? (It is obvious that if you have a fresh ham every day, you must "raise" exactly 182½ pigs in the year.) Don't whisper that Mr Green bought his hams. Not he. They were raised every one on his own plantation "'way up yonder over the moun-

tain, back of the sto'." I have not seen them, of course. But believing is better than seeing. Those Yankees destroyed everything, pigs included. There are no such droves now. But if we cannot have the pig of the period, let us have the porker of the past. I believe firmly in those 182½ grunters, and nothing shall make me ask what became of the odd ham—whether they kept it over for leap-year, or aught else.

New-Year's Eve, 187–.—I was telling you about the aristocratic people we have in our neighbourhood.

Well, there are the Nelsons, who live just across the river. They claim (that is American for assert) that they are descended from the famous Lord Nelson. A descendant of *the* Lord Nelson came out here and settled. Nelson county was named after him. At the same time, these Virginian Nelsons "claim" to have come here when first Virginia was settled, and to be, in consequence, F. F. V.'s. How are the two "claims" to be reconciled? Because the barony of Nelson was not created until 1801. And that settlement of Virginia which made

the F. F. V.'s was in Sir Walter Raleigh's time, in 1584.

I am afraid we rather made fun of all these aristocratic Browns and Greens and Robertsons (of Scotland).

A., who is as unsophisticated a creature as ever lived in the backwoods, began to look upon us as so many doubting Thomases. By chance a 'Peerage' happened to be in the book-box. When first I saw it, I felt sorry its place had not been occupied by a more useful book. Now it seemed likely to prove not quite useless after all. I got the book, and bade A. see for himself in what year the title was created, and how many descendants the famous Admiral had.

"Perhaps they forgot to put it in," said A., who is one who "believeth all things."

M. said, "My mother knew Lady Nelson perfectly well. She knew all about the Nelsons. You may take my word for it, the book is right."

So poor A. was crushed.

However, he is of a trusting nature, and was not to be lightly induced to believe that quite

all the stories of descent from English earls were humbug. A few miles off there lived some more F. F. V.'s, superior to anything of the kind we had seen, who were closely related to a nobleman of no mean political capacity, not long deceased. The name was the same; it was spelt the same. What could be more conclusive?

I was obliged to bring out the 'Peerage' once more to crush A.

"Did they, too, come out with Sir Walter Raleigh?"

"Certainly. They say they did, and they ought to know."

Now my researches, such as they were, had brought me to the point of doubting whether Sir Walter Raleigh did come out *himself* in 1584. A settlement was made, *under his auspices*, on the shore of what is not now Virginia at all, but North Carolina. One thing is certain: that settlement was not permanent, nor the next, nor the next after that. Instead of being a sober community of godly men, bringing their wives and families with them, like the Puritans and the Pilgrim Fathers, they were a company

of drinkers, dicers, brawlers, and vagabonds, with no scheme of colonisation at all in their empty heads—only a vision of an El Dorado which they were to despoil, so as to have the wherewithal to return to England, and enjoy a new career of drinking and dicing.

I told A. as much. A. replied that I had got into a habit of doubting everything.

So then I showed him that the peerage in question was quite a recent one, and that the family name was as different from the title as well could be.

One day, on returning from a walk, I found a bevy of pretty young ladies who had arrived to "get acquainted." The pretty creatures' heads were bent over the old 'Peerage' as I entered. They accepted eagerly my offer to lend them the book. When I got it back it was so broken to pieces that I am sure they must have taken it by turn to sleep with it under their pillow. Some time after, an English lady said to me, "Those people tell me they are cousins of Lord —— through the ——s. How do they make it out?"

I laughed. It was really very ingenious this reconstruction of the legend, now that, thanks to my old 'Peerage,' they had discovered Lord ——'s family name. But now they have invented two sets of cousins instead of one; so it is more "mixed" than ever to my British understanding.

One broiling August afternoon we went to return a call on some more F. F. V.'s. We had waited till then because we wanted to be shown a short cut, as the highroad was too long for a walk, and both A. and. E. were too busy to ride with us, and did not at all approve of our doing as Virginian country ladies do—that is, riding off by ourselves to pay visits. Our short cut lay through woods and ferny hollows, and across the bed of a cascade, dry when we passed it, but a furious torrent after rain. A., who was anxious that I should make a good impression, was comforted on being told that my dress was French, though grieved at my obduracy in wearing no jewellery. Wouldn't I even put in a pair of ear-rings? People thought so much of such things in this country. I tried to do it, to

please him, but it was beyond endurance. Earrings—heavy ones, too—and the thermometer at 84°!

He said, "There's one genuine thing you have, anyhow, which they have not—that is your teeth. They have not a tooth between them, and they will be sure to say that yours are false."

That was a crusher for me.

After a delightful scramble through woods and rocks, we reached a small whitewashed frame-house surrounded by a beautiful grove of trees. A little way back were all sorts of outhouses, tobacco-barns, negro cabins, &c., all in various stages of decay. The master of the house, warned by the barking of several furious dogs, appeared at the door, ordered the dogs off, and welcomed us in.

I was handed up the steep wooden steps with a flourishing French bow and wave of the hand, rather stagey, but well-intentioned. "Walk in, madam; walk in, major; walk in, lieutenant." (The major's rank was entirely honorary. It is a way they have.) I found myself handed into

a dark room, where several people were seated fanning themselves,—"Lieutenant" seizing an opportunity of giving me a wicked wink before we passed into the gloom. As soon as my eyes became accustomed to the absence of light, I began to observe, and found that A. was right about the beauty of all the girls and—their black teeth. If they had kept quiet, the defect would not have been so apparent. But the incessant laughter, the "Oh my's!" vociferated from widely-spread mouths, made the ugliness—their only ugliness—unpleasantly remarkable.

How it was I do not remember, but the conversation, which began on the important subject of corn and blade fodder, drifted into that of the settlement of the State of Virginia.

"We are not Yankees," said the lady of the house. "We despise" (*i.e.*, dislike) "the Yankees. We are all descended from the English."

I assented.

"Yes," Mrs —— continued, "Virginia was settled by the English nobil'ty—everybody knows that. I claim to be English in a way

myself. I am descended from Sir ——, who was a member of the English aristocracy."

"Indeed! I did not know there was a baronetcy attached to that name." (To tell the truth, I knew there was not.)

"Well, ma'am, I don't know if he was a baronet exactly. Indeed I think he was a knight; but he was a 'Sir' anyhow. And some of your English earls and dukes are knights, ain't they?"

"Undoubtedly. Several of our English dukes are knights of the Order of the Garter."

"I don't remember if he was that. Anyhow, he was a 'Sir,' and he's my ancestor. Yes'm."

"Very interesting. I daresay you have your old family pedigree, and any amount of old documents."

"Well, ma'am, it's partly tradition and partly documents."

I fanned myself, and drank iced water with great gravity. I think I told you that the first thing which is done when one enters a house is to bring one iced water and a fan. Then the lady of the house begs you to take off your hat.

That seems absurd to English notions; but if you were accustomed to pay visits with the thermometer ranging from 80° to 96°, you would be glad to take off even a light straw hat when you were asked.

Then we were asked the stock question,—Had we been to church? E. replied with an emphatic "No." He chose to make Sunday a day of rest, he said, for himself as well as his beasts. He could not in conscience make them go fourteen miles, even if he felt inclined to go to please himself. The ladies here confessed that they had not been that morning either. They did not "feel like it." It was too hot.

Then A., prompted by I know not what spirit of mischief, said to one of the men present, "Do you believe in feeding your horses on Sundays, just the same as on other days?"

"Wal," said the person referred to, a justice of the peace, and therefore dubbed "squire," "I reckon I do, sir. Some don't feed 'em but once on the Sabbath, allowing that it ain't right to labour on that day. But I could never see it quite in that light."

Said A. in his mild, matter-of-fact way, "I suppose that those who do not feed their animals more than once a-day on Sundays do not take more than one meal themselves."

There was a general laugh. "Reckon they do eat just as much as on week-days," said the squire, walking solemnly towards the spittoon.

We walked home by moonlight, I in fear and trembling lest I should tread on a rattlesnake.

A. said to me, "Was that a stunner she told about her ancestor?"

I told him about what I imagined to be the case: that this person in her ignorance supposed that a man, because knighted for some reason or other, became a "member of the English aristocracy." Where there is ignorance there will surely be exaggeration without necessarily wilful imposition. I really believe the woman believed what she said. I have heard of English labourers of the name of Russell declaring themselves to be far-away cousins of the Duke of Bedford.

How the same spirit of exaggeration runs

through all their talk! They tell you of boys throwing — not stones, but rocks. Talk of General Lee to a man who has served under him. He will tell you, with tears in his eyes perhaps, that a better man never walked— not the earth, but the globe. Does a Democrat complain of the necessity of reform in the Civil Service? A Republican replies that there does not exist a better on this planet. And so on. All seem to make it a rule never to use a small word if a big one can be found.

Not long ago an Englishman complained to me that he had been in America for three months, and had as yet met with no "Americanisms." He thought Dickens must have exaggerated absurdly. On inquiry, I found that he had travelled neither west nor south, but had only been in and round Boston, and, more than that, among Boston people. Now you don't know, perhaps, that Boston is the "hub of the universe," and that it is considered a real misfortune by Bostonians not to have been born in Boston. The "hub" radiates a certain amount of "sweetness and light." Beyond

that magic circle you cannot be called born. You came into the world accidentally, "just anyhow;" and you are of the ruck, and must remain in the ruck, with Dante, Shakespeare, Titian, and many other worthy people who were not born in Boston. Had Dickens remained in Boston, and only been allowed to see Boston people from the time he landed till he went home again, he could never have written 'Martin Chuzzlewit.' I have heard the American part of that book called a caricature. To my mind it reads like a literal transcription of facts. Now this is what happened to E. when he went to the post-office the other day. A Virginian gentleman came in to fetch his mail. Opening his newspaper, he presently remarked that the editor of the 'Louisville (Kentucky) Courier' (he pronounced it Kew-rier) was dead.

"I suppose you have heard of him," said the Virginian to E.

"Never," said E.

"Wal, I do wonder at that! He was a very remarkable man, sir. He was a poet."

"Oh, he wrote 'pomes' did he?"

"Yes, sir, he wrote pomes — splendid ones too. He was quite a prominent man. He would never fight a duel."

"You don't mean to say that?"

"Yes, sir; that's so. Of course, if he were attacked *on* the street, he would defend himself. Everybody knew that. But he would never challenge any man. He said it was against his principles to do so, and he never did it. Yes, sir; he was quite a remarkable man was Moses B. Momin. I wonder you never heard of him. That's strange." Now I think that if Dickens had wished such a little incident as this in 'Martin Chuzzlewit,' he need not have altered this one much.

On one occasion I went on the boat with some friends to do a day's shopping in town. While performing my toilet in the ladies' dressing-room I was suddenly poked in the back. I turned sharply round. My assailant was a middle-aged, black-eyed, fat woman, a mountain of flesh. I did not know Virginia could produce such a fat woman. She smiled,

not one whit abashed at the severity of my demeanour, and said, abruptly, "Give us a pin, will you?" During the day we passed her in the street. She struck my arm with her fan, saying, "Taking a walk, eh?" On our return we found the same woman on deck, seated on her trunk. "So you are back again, are you?" she said. We sat down as far from her as we could; but she did not feel any antipathy to us. Quite the contrary. She thought us an interesting party. She came up to us, and said, pointing to one of the party who had walked away to have a smoke—

"Is that yer husband?"

"No!" said I, with as glacial an aspect as I could assume. But I know I became red with annoyance.

"Is he yer beau, then?" the dreadful creature asked.

Now if she had asked the question of the right person, I would not have cared so much. But to have that asked of me, and the *fiancée* of the man in question sitting by me!

. . . Since I began this letter I have

been on the same journey again. This time I went alone and stayed a few days. I went to choose a piano.

A short time before E. had heard of a splendid instrument which had been left with a grocer by a gentleman who had gone away owing him a large sum of money. So much was said about this piano that I was made to go to town without delay in order to secure it, as E. was assured it would be a great bargain. After a long walk to the house where it was to be seen, I found it an atrocious old thing about seventy years old, with six octaves. Not seeing a single music-shop, I bethought me of an acquaintance living in one of the suburbs who had a very good piano. She might know of some one who had a good one to sell. So I went, found her at home, was most kindly received and pressed to stay. I was really glad to exchange the hotel, with its street aspect, street noises, and street smells—a happy mixture of tobacco, pork, molasses, and melons—for a very pretty, quiet *rus in urbe*, where the houses stood in large lots of three and four

acres, prettily laid out in gardens and shrubberies, and divided from the road by neat fences or osage-orange hedges. Here Jersey cows wandered peacefully, or lay and chewed the cud at their owners' back-doors. The fences were so low that one could enjoy all the beauties of the gardens as one passed by, Madeira vines, China roses, magnolias, and crape-myrtles all seemed to vie with one another in wild luxuriance. The crape-myrtle is the loveliest flowering-tree I ever saw. The flowers are either pink or lilac, white or scarlet; and at a distance they resemble bunches of feathers. As soon as I had been refreshed by the usual iced water and fan, and had satisfied inquiries how I liked this country, my hostess asked—

"What on earth could make you settle in that part of Virginia?"

I explained that one of its attractions was the absence of ague. Also, there was a good deal of uncleared land, which was very desirable.

"Oh, I know nothing about the land," she said, as if that were a matter quite beneath a lady's consideration. "But there is no society there."

Not much, certainly. But what there was was very select—all F. F. V.'s, I assured her.

She was indignant. "There are no F. F. V.'s there, and there never were," she said. "I can tell you exactly where all the F. F. V.'s—the real old Virginians—settled. I know all about it. And you may take my word for it that not one settled up in that neighbourhood."

I endeavoured to bear up; but this was a blow.

While in town I met with a young lady who was introduced as a descendant of Pocahontas. I was asked if I did not see the Indian features. I was obliged to say that I did not. She was as like a healthy, rosy English girl as she could be. I also met a young man who informed me that he was, through his mother, a claimant to the dormant earldom of Mar! The claimant was a very good-looking young fellow, quite gentlemanly enough in appearance to be Earl of anything you please. I did not crush him with the 'Peerage.' I said that *when* the dormant earldom was revived in his favour, I should be the first to congratulate him.

During my stay in town I was made more

fully aware of the extreme importance attached by people here to church-membership. As my hostess knew of nobody who wanted to sell a piano, she gave me the addresses of the book-stores, four in number, where pianos and music were to be met with. I was recommended in particular to one man, "a member of *our* church, and a most reliable person."

"There's Mr A., who has a good many pianos, and always two or three new ones," said a lady present.

"Yes; but he is not a member," was the reply. "He is not so reliable as Mr P. Now Mr P. is quite a prominent member. He is one of our deacons, and *very* reliable. You can quite depend on what he says."

I took the book-stores as they came. The first I entered was that belonging to the man who was *not* a church member, and not so reliable as Deacon P. Strange to say, he was the only one of the four tradesmen who did not attempt to impose upon me that day. I looked at various American pianos, new and old, and English and German pianos in all stages of

debility. Here I tested the so-called durability of American pianos, and found that the average length of time for their lasting, as far as tone was concerned, was no more than seven years. The German-American makers are better than that, but their instruments do not find their way down south now. I mentioned a piano which had not been tuned for several years. "Yes, madam," was the reply; "we know those pianos, but it would be no good to keep them in stock, because there is no money in this neighbourhood to pay the price we must ask for them." Poor, miserable, poverty-stricken South! From pianos down to boots and shoes, the "cheap and nasty" must go to the Southern market.

I tried all the pianos, new and old, and liked none of them. Then the storekeeper sent a boy for a key, and requested me to follow him to a warehouse next door. There he introduced me to a Broadwood Grand, about thirty years old.

"This, madam, may very likely suit you. It is by a celebrated English maker."

I looked at the nameplate and saw, "To her

Majesty." I struck a chord. There was all the difference between this and the other pianos that there was between the voice of Grisi grown old and the voice of a singer who had never had a voice. This piano was a Grisi grown old.

"Do you think it is thirty years old?" I asked.

The storekeeper would not bind himself to a year or two; and when I tried to persuade him, from internal evidence, that it was thirty years old, he set off that fact by telling me that the maker, Broadwood, had been Lord Mayor of London.

After that, you know, I was obliged to take that piano.

I went, however, to the other book-stores for form's sake, and found a collection of such ancient instruments as were worth seeing for mere curiosity. One, of German make, had attached to it an "improvement," so called—an Æolian swell, for which an extra fifty dollars was charged. Another had the sounding-board of white wood elaborately painted with a flower-border. Its shape, spindly legs, and inlaid work,

reminded me of a piano I had once seen in an exhibition, said to have belonged to Mozart. One most ugly and curious instrument, of Viennese make, must have been the prototype of the cabinet-piano. Let me not forget to say that every one of these pianos was vouched for by Mr ——, the organist of "our church," as being an exemplary instrument, well worth the price asked for it. The thing with the Æolian swell had been taken by a lady, but had been returned at the end of six months, as she had not money to pay for it. I was not indiscreet enough to ask her name; but should doubtless have been told had I done so. The "very reliable" storekeeper, the "prominent member of our church," I found the veriest white-haired old humbug I had ever had to do with. I believe that his pianos were brought out by the English settlers, the "nobility," who first colonised Virginia. Yet how reverend was his aspect as he told me how Mr So-and-so, organist of "our church," had expressed his entire approval of them all, only yesterday, and that they were only going at that low price because they were

taking up too much room. The thing with the Æolian swell (an "improvement" which looks something like a window-blind) was, in particular, a most tremendous bargain (at about double the price I had been asked for the Broadwood).

But every blessing brings its curse with it, I suppose. We have our Broadwood, which we never wish to change except for a better Broadwood. But the Broadwood wants a tuner. Imagine an individual whose assurance is only equalled by his expanse of shirt-front, who will strum a great deal and tune a very little,—who will ask you to sing to him, and tell you he reckons he'll stay a day or two longer, when you, the day after his arrival, intimate that the buggy is at his disposal for his return to town. Imagine such an individual, and then say whether, in my place, you would consider him a blessing. More especially, as I feel quite sure that if that individual were to see me with a spade or trowel in my hand he would despise me. Fancy the bitterness of being despised by a piano-tuner with a big shirt-front!

E. went to town to bring the piano home. Such a white elephant as it was! First, a boat had to be chosen, with a master not likely to get drunk and put the piano off at a wrong place. Then he had to make a kind of landing-stage and a shed to shelter it, in case the boat arrived in the middle of the night. There was quite a commotion when a small messenger arrived breathless, to say that the piano was at the lock. Every mattress in the house was put into the ox-cart, to break the shock of that terribly rough piece of road. How we laughed to see the oxen toiling slowly up the hill, with a long tail of mean whites and blacks of all sizes, all staring solemnly at the wooden case which concealed our Broadwood! If not a funeral, one might have supposed that it was an ambulance-cart at the least, with a "mighty sick body" within!

Now I have told you how the piano got home. But I got home in quite another way.

It had rained all day in a quiet, persistent manner, the day I meant to return. But there was no sign to tell that, twenty miles up the

river, it was raining a deluge. I hoped to be at home at supper-time, and therefore took no supper on board the boat. When we arrived at the lock where the mail is put off, the captain declared that the river was dangerous, both because of the tow-path being under water and because of snags (*i.e.*, floating trunks and logs washed down by the current), and he would go no further.

You know the rule as to meals in American hotels and on board American boats. If you do not eat at one meal, you can wait for the next; there is no possibility of getting anything between times. So in my case "next time" meant to-morrow morning.

I resolved to get up at the first break of dawn and make my way home. I was only four miles off. I could almost see the house. M. had not been well, and I had stayed a day longer than I had intended. There were but few ladies in the cabin, so I was able to lie on a sofa with my face close to an open window. I escaped thus the usual "Black-hole of Calcutta" sensation, which makes travelling on these boats

such a misery. Immediately after supper the beds are put up, the men are called by name to choose their berths, a thick felt curtain is drawn across the upper half, the part nearest the stern, which constitutes the ladies' cabin, the beds are slung up, the windows shut, and the unhappy passengers are left to their reflections. In summer, with the temperature between 80° and 90°, and a bad petroleum lamp burning, the atmosphere speedily becomes pestilential. Even in frosty November, I would prefer passing the night in the horses' or cows' stable to passing it in that pestiferous ladies' cabin.

At the first cock-crow I arose and peeped into the other cabin. No other way was there to get on deck. The place was full of snorers. They lay on the tables and on the floors. I could not hope to pass without disturbing some of them. I opened my window gently, and slipped out on the tow-path. "Well begun is half-done," said I, and stepped out jauntily, the water being just on a level with the tow-path. I walked on for half a mile to where there was a bend in the river. Here the tow-path dis-

appeared, and I was obliged to climb the rocks. Again I descended. I could almost see the house now. One more turn showed me a plain sheet of water reaching quite to the foot of the cliffs; no tow-path visible. I climbed again, got up to the top of the cliffs somehow, and found myself in a little valley instead of on a flat table-land as I had expected. I went on through woods and fields, brambles, and long grass, and over fences, till I found myself at a spot where usually I could pass dry-footed, about a quarter of a mile from home. Now it was a boiling torrent going headlong down to the river. I did not venture to cross, fearing to be carried down and dashed into the river. I walked half a mile up that creek before finding a safe place. Then I laid a fence plank across and did it cleverly, but the next minute I was up to my knees in what is usually a mere rillet. This made me reckless, and I went on in as straight a line as I knew, regardless of mud, and reached home at 9 A.M., having been walking for four hours, with the hill behind our house staring at me all the time!

I learned that there had been a wind-storm as well as a rain-storm the day before. So terrific was the wind that E. had not sent one of the servants to the spring for water. Even if the bucket had remained on his head, which is doubtful, the wind would have blown the water out of it.

With his usual ingenuity, E. managed to get a piano-key made from a model he gave the blacksmith. Thus we are saved the infliction of a piano-tuner.

. . . That was in October. As I write now, the snow lies deep on all sides, the river is frozen, and E. is congratulating himself that he has fifteen tons of ice in his ice-house. And this morning the thermometer in the porch stood at 7° below zero!

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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